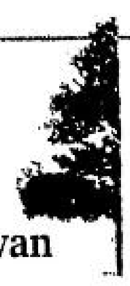
METRO / A19

Regine Velasquez files P200,000 suit vs car dealer over defective van



ACROSS / A16

DENR adopts tree cloning for reforestation; project to be launched tomorrow

SPORTS / A23

Wade stars anew as Heat clinches 1st NBA crown

ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1

Snooky fired from Capt. Barbell for being habitually late

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, June 22, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 194 P18 website: www.inq7.net

NPA declares ceasefire in Mt. Bulusan villages

By Bobby Labalan, Delfin Mallari Jr. and Niño Jesus Orbeta
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

SORSOGON CITY—WHILE THE MILITARY IS GIRDing for an all-out war against the communist New People's Army in Luzon, NPA guerrillas in Sorsogon yesterday said they would not attack government forces helping villagers around the restive Bulusan volcano.

NPA DECLARES/ A8

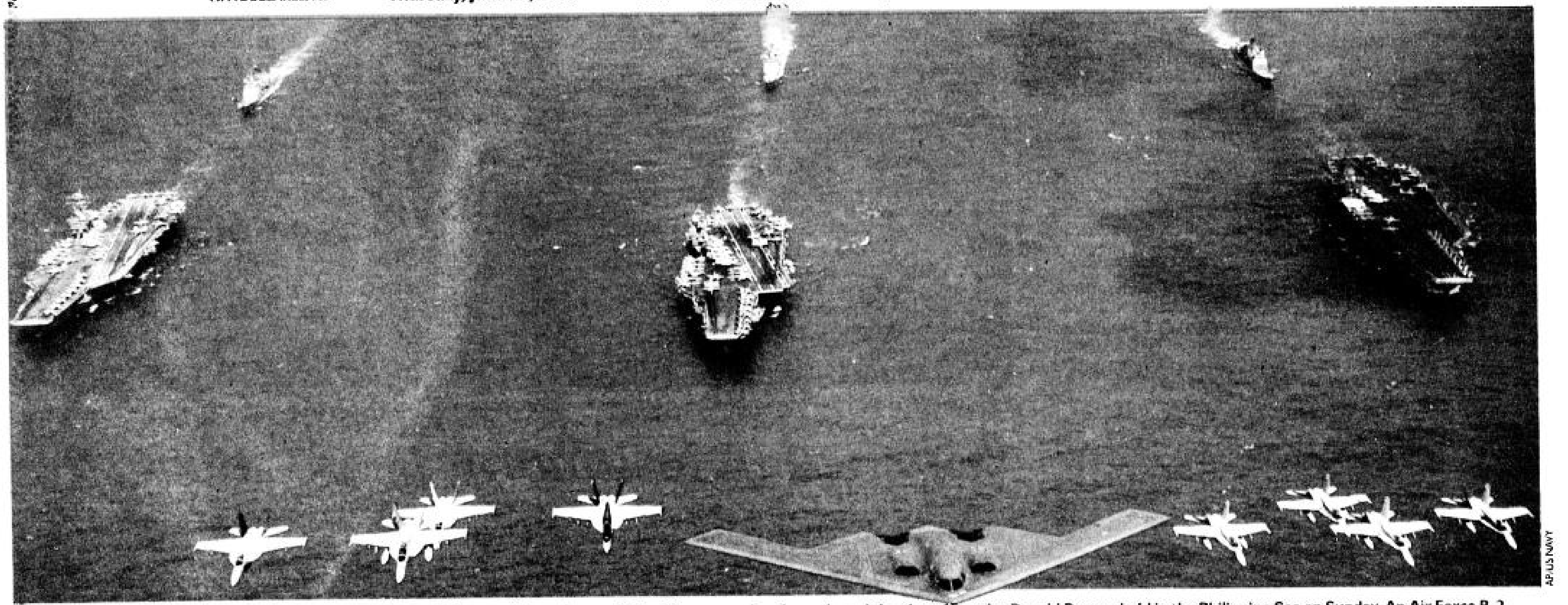
Bulacan governor slams Palparan's one-man army

By Fe Zamora, Tonette Orejas and Christine O. Avendaño

AT LEAST THREE MILITARY GROUPS ARE CONducting counterinsurgency operations in Bulacan, and each is apparently independent of the other, according to Bulacan Gov. Josefina de la Cruz.

One group is headed by an enlisted man who reports only to Maj. Gen. Jovito Palaparan, chief of

BULACAN/ A6



AP/US NAVY

US PUTS UP A SHOW FOR CHINA. For the first time, the Chinese military observed US military exercises from aboard the aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan held in the Philippine Sea on Sunday. An Air Force B-2 bomber along with other aircraft from the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps fly over the carriers aside from Ronald Reagan, the Kitty Hawk and Abraham Lincoln for Exercise Valiant Shield. *(Story on Page A8.)*

NPA 'taxpayers' warned

Government to go after companies paying 'revolutionary taxes'

By Christine O. Avendaño

PEOPLE OR BUSINESSES PAYING "REVOLUTIONary taxes" to communist rebels, whether willingly or not, are now in the cross hairs of Malacañang as part of its campaign to bleed the finances of the rebels dry.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said authorities would step up the campaign against those giving financial contributions to the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

Certain logging, telecommunication, transportation and construction companies are said to be giving millions in revolutionary tax to the NPA.

Failure to pay the "tax" usually results in the heavy equipment, buses or cell sites of these companies being torched or bombed by the rebels.

"Don't give aid or comfort to the enemy," he said yesterday at his weekly news conference.

Ermita said the government would "definitely" go after "anyone who abets insurgency."

"They would be appropriately charged should authorities find out who and what they are doing to contribute to the cause of the NPA through revolutionary taxes," the executive secretary told reporters.

Ermita urged the people to help the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police identify those giving contributions to the NPA.

The CPP and the NPA have come to rely heavily on revolutionary taxes to sustain their operations because their being listed as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union has cut the flow of funding from their supporters abroad.

Fees paid by politicians that allowed them to campaign during the 2004 national elections in NPA-influenced or controlled areas were another source of money for the rebels.

Ermita said the NPA was using the money contributed by individuals and businesses to buy radio and guns that are used against government soldiers.

NPA/ A6

Recycled budget gives GMA P48B

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

NO WONDER SHE'S NOT DISAPpointed with the nonpassage of her proposed P1.05-trillion budget for 2006 that will result in the reenactment of last year's budget of P907.56 billion.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is sitting on a virtual pork barrel of at least P48 billion under a reenacted budget due to Congress' failure to pass the 2006 budget, according to one of the country's economic managers.

Pork barrel funds are items in the national budget that are usually spent on the pet projects of legislators or the President. They are sources of hefty kickbacks.

Before the budget talks in the bicameral conference committee collapsed two weeks ago, the President had said that she wanted an "all-or-nothing" budget, hinting that a reenacted budget was preferable to any budget that fell short of her proposal. The Senate had cut P63.7 billion from Malacañang's proposed budget for 2006.

The economic manager, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on this matter, said a reenacted budget would give Ms Arroyo full discretion on how to spend the P21 billion in nonrepeating projects and the P27.7 billion in interest savings from the 2005 budget.

RECYCLED/ A6

LYN RILLON

THE GANG'S (NOT QUITE) ALL HERE. President Arroyo attends the birthday lunch of Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson (left), who jests that the party is really a reunion of sorts of the so-called Erap midnight Cabinet what with Mark Jimenez around (standing, right) but it "lacks a quorum."

'Midnight Cabinet' misses Atong

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Frank Cimatu

VIGAN CITY—THE GANG'S ALL HERE (except for Charlie "Atong" Ang).

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday attended what became a virtual reunion of her ousted predecessor's "midnight Cabinet," hobnobbing with the likes of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, businessman William Gatchalian and former Manila Rep. and ex-convict Mark Jimenez.

The place was Singson's compound known as "Baluarte," and the occasion was the lunch party for his 65th birthday, at which Ms Arroyo was the guest of honor.

Jimenez stole the show from the birthday boy when he made a late entrance, dressed in a white T-shirt and pants and kissed Ms Arroyo's hand.

The President arrived in Vigan at 1 p.m., had lunch with Singson and select VIPs at the main dining hall, and left Ilocos Sur at 3 p.m.

During her visit, she opened the city

MIDNIGHT/ A8

HAAAY... KULANG-KULANG!

Sin's courage recalled on 1st death anniversary

By Christian V. Esguerra

HOW DOES A COUNTRY RETURN a favor to a man its people have so much to thank for?

Jaime Cardinal Sin, the most revered Filipino Catholic bishop in recent history, would be best honored by emulating the ideals he shared and fought for throughout his life, his longtime protégé said yesterday.

"We must never allow courage to die in the Philippines. We must never allow courage to die out in the Church," Bataan Bishop Socrates Villegas said in his homily during the Mass marking the first death anniversary of Sin.

Sin, an Aklan native whose

SIN'S COURAGE/ A8

FONDLY REMEMBERED: Book launch and Masses mark the first death anniversary of Cardinal Sin.

Job fair for 'differently abled' soldiers

By Nikko Dizon

THE STORY OF THIS DISABLED soldier is one that has made the rounds among his comrades.

But none of them knows his name, or can say what had happened to him. One vaguely remembers watching a feature about him on TV a few years ago.

All they know is that this Army man lost a leg in a battle. He ended up collecting old bottles around Fort Bonifacio to sell and earn his keep.

No one even knows if he is still alive, Dr. Peter Galvez, medical officer of the Department of National Defense, told the INQUIRER on Monday. "We hope he still is. We want to find him because we feel responsible for him," Galvez said.

If Galvez had his way, he would have wanted to locate this soldier by today, when the DND and the Armed Forces of the Philippines hold a job fair for disabled soldiers at Camp Aguinaldo in partnership with other government agencies.

The fair, called "Kabuhayan para sa Kawal na nagka-Kapansanan (K3)," aims to help disabled soldiers in and out of the service and their dependents find employment outside the military.

More than 60 companies are joining the fair. Around 20 of them are open to hiring applicants with physical disabilities.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to attend the affair.

JOB FAIR/ A5

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2006
Second FRONTPAGE
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Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over Palawan.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: KATE V. PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/07/05

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

RP gets $200-M loan for education

By Michelle Remo and Doris C. Dumlao

THE WORLD BANK HAS APPROVED A $200 MILlion loan to the Philippines, its biggest to the country in 10 years, to address the declining quality of basic education.

In announcing the loan yesterday, World Bank country director Joachim von Amsberg said the bank agreed to invest more in the Philippines because of the government's improving fiscal situation, which reflected the country's improved capability to service obligations.

"We can increase it [official development assistance] because the fiscal situation of the country is more healthy now. Three years ago, we had to hold back with our lending because we felt that we would have contributed to the problem of increasing debt," Von Amsberg told reporters.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the World Bank assistance has a strategic focus: "fiscal reform in the short term and helping the Department of Education be more effective in the longer term."

The money will be used over the next five years to train the education system's staff in financial accountability, improve teaching standards and raise the quality of key courses like English, Filipino, math and science, the World Bank said in a statement.

The bank noted that while the Philippines has been acclaimed as one of the most highly educated countries in the world, national and international tests had shown that the the country's human capital has been slowly eroding, largely a result of minimal investment in education.

It cited a 2003 study of trends in international mathematics and science that ranked the Philippines in the lowest 10 percent of countries in both subjects.

In the 2003-2004 school year, only 20 percent of sixth-grade pupils and less than one percent of high school seniors had mastered the basic competencies of key subjects, the study said.

Government spending on social services such as education and infrastructure has been constrained in recent years by a large budget deficit and heavy debt load of about P4 trillion.

The government has undertaken fiscal reforms that included broadening the coverage of the value-added tax and raising the tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent to shore up revenues and allow it to spend more on social services.

Von Amsberg said the recent fiscal reforms and resulting fiscal improvement have created a more favorable environment to support strategic reforms for better public services, such as education sector reforms.

"The World Bank strategy for the Philippines is designed to support those strategic priorities in the national budget that achieve fiscal stability and improved governance," he said.

The Department of Finance began talks with the World Bank and other foreign lenders on their ODA program for the Philippines starting this year and over the next three years.

The DOF said projects and programs proposed by the government for ODA funding focused on the development of the country's fiscal and power sectors.

The World Bank and the Philippines also signed an agreement on Wednesday to oversee a $1 million grant given by the Japanese government to prepare private sector support for the country's power reform project.

Teves said the grant will support the design of risk-mitigating measures in the country's power supply, transmission and distribution systems, which would help improve investor confidence in the privatization of state-run National Power Corp.

The government has set a goal of reducing its budget deficit from P146.8 billion last year to only P125 billion this year, or 2.8 percent of gross domestic product. *With reports from Reuters and AP*

NO GUARANTEE: Former President Joseph Estrada gives an interview after another day in court.

RAFFY LERMA

Erap lied in testimony, prosecutors say

STATE PROSECUTORS YESTERDAY SOUGHT to discredit deposed President Joseph Estrada's testimony on his plunder charges, accusing him of lying in court when he denied allegations of kickbacks from government contracts.

Special prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio told the Sandiganbayan Special Division that the former leader had given inaccurate statements when he testified last month that he never gave any government guarantee to loans that were entered into by state companies.

Citing documents he got from the Office of the President, Villa-Ignacio said Estrada had agreed to guarantee nearly 45 billion yen ($387 million) in numerous soft loans from Japanese aid agencies in 2000.

"We have documents to prove that Estrada approved and signed several contracts with the government acting as a guarantor for the loans," said Villa-Ignacio.

But Estrada's lawyer Jose Flaminiano said none of the documents presented by Villa-Ignacio was a sovereign guarantee but were "full authorizations" to enter into various deals in behalf of the government as "guarantor."

Villa-Ignacio also insisted on playing a videotape on the contract signing of a controversial power plant deal.

But the anti-graft court stopped him from playing the tape without showing first a copy of the contract that was signed by Estrada in 1998.

The video clip showed Estrada in a contract signing ceremony wherein he allegedly gave sovereign guarantee to the Industrias Metalurgica Pescarmona Sociedad Argentina (Impsa).

The court also blocked the prosecution's effort to introduce new evidence outside Estrada's testimony.

The court stopped Villa-Ignacio from asking Estrada about a private company owned by one of his alleged mistresses and about an expensive mansion in Forbes Park in Makati City which was given as a wedding gift to his daughter, Jackie Ejercito-Lopez.

Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice and Special Division chair Teresita de Castro chided Villa-Ignacio for asking questions which the magistrate deemed unfair for the anti-graft court and the former leader.

De Castro and Special Division Associate Justices Francisco Villaruz and Diosdado Peralta took turns in explaining that it would be unfair to Estrada and the defense panel if the prosecution would be allowed to play the video without producing in court the contract that was supposedly signed by Estrada.

Villaruz said there would be no basis to show the video if Estrada and his lawyers would not be confronted with the contract itself and therefore the court would not allow it.

"If you want to show the video, you have to produce the contract first," he told Villa-Ignacio.

Estrada maintained that he never signed any agreement extending sovereign guarantees to any government project.

"That was my policy during my administration because sovereign guarantee was disadvantageous to the government and it was my duty to protect the government," he said. *Reuters with a report from Nelson Flores*

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Taulava seeks review of tax evasion charge

BASKETBALL PLAYER PAULIASI TAULAVA IS set to ask Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for a review of the tax evasion charges which a state prosecutor has filed against him before the Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC).

Taulava, through his lawyer Eduardo Francisco, will also ask the Makati RTC, to suspend court proceedings on the case pending the resolution of his appeal with the DOJ.

Francisco stressed that there has never been any "willful intention" on the part of Taulava to evade paying taxes. "On the contrary, there has been a continuing effort by Mr. Taulava to settle his tax liabilities with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR)," he stressed.

At the same time, Francisco clarified that Taulava did not blame the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) nor his Talk 'N Text team for the tax woes he is facing, but rather his "lack of vigilance" and his over-reliance on unscrupulous accountants who prepared his income tax returns.

In her resolution, State Prosecutor Ma. Cristina Montera-Barot recommended the filing of the following cases against Taulava:

- Failure to file Income Tax Returns for taxable years 1999-2003;
- Failure to register as professional basketball player for taxable years 1999 and 2000;
- Failure to pay the annual registration fee for taxable years 2002 and 2003;
- Securing more than one Tax identification Number (TIN).

"Taxes in the amount of P3.7 million had been properly deducted and credited to Mr. Taulava by Piltel and PLDT from 1999 to 2003. The corresponding withholding tax returns had also been filed with the BIR by the two companies," said Francisco.

According to Francisco, Taulava did not file income tax returns for 1999 and 2000 on the advice of his then manager, Ricardo Santos and his accountant who said there was no need for him to do so under the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997.

Francisco said this was based on the assumption that Taulava, as an employee of PLDT, received purely compensation income, and thus was exempted from filing income tax returns from 1999 to 2001.

TAULAVA

But he stressed that everything Taulava did was in good faith, without malice and without the intention of running away from his obligation to pay income taxes to BIR.

"Fact is that Mr. Taulava filed ITRs for 2002 and 2003 after a new accountant told him that her predecessor erred in his advice to him. Also, Mr. Taulava wrote the BIR Commissioners Parayno and Buñag two letters dated July 6 and Sept. 5 of 2005, expressing his willingness to settle his tax liabilities. But the BIR has not given any response to the twin letters," Francisco said.

The BIR has assessed that Taulava's tax liabilities from 1999 to 2003 amounted to P8.4 million, including the principal of P3.6 million and penalties and surcharges amounting to P4.87 million.

Taulava said he issued checks to his new accountant to cover tax payments for the years 2002 and 2003.

Based on the accountant's affidavit, but which was not considered by Barot, she encashed Taulava's cheques for tax payments and gave the money to a BIR employee for payment to be made on Taulava's behalf.

The accountant said the BIR employee, as it turned out, provided Taulava with forged ITRs and ran away with the player's money.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Arroyo lawyers' new tack: 1st impeach case still alive

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL ARROYO'S lawyers said yesterday they will block a plan by opposition lawmakers to file a new impeachment complaint against her with a legal technicality that could delay the effort by at least a year.

Ms Arroyo survived an impeachment attempt on vote-rigging and corruption allegations in September when her dominant allies in the House of Representatives blocked three complaints on a technicality. Some opposition members questioned the dismissal with the Supreme Court, but it hasn't ruled yet.

Rivals have warned that unless she fully answers the allegations against her, a yearlong political impasse will drag on and could force some groups to resort to a coup attempt or a "people power" revolt like those which have ousted two Presidents—Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada.

Still hanging

While refusing to quit, Ms Arroyo has denied any wrongdoing but has refused to answer the allegations in detail.

The Constitution allows only one impeachment proceeding against a president in a year, so opposition lawmakers and anti-Arroyo groups said last month they would file a new complaint after the current one-year limit ends on June 26.

Ms Arroyo's lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, said that although the House dismissed last year's impeachment bids, the complaints have not been terminated because the Supreme Court could still decide to revive them.

"The law is very clear: you can't file another impeachment complaint against the president while another one is still hanging," Macalintal said, adding that he will ask the House to dismiss any new impeachment bid against the President until the Supreme Court has resolved questions over last year's complaints.

If the Supreme Court dismisses last year's impeachment complaints, opposition lawmakers will have to wait for another one-year ban to lapse before filing a new complaint, he said.

But opposition leader Rep. Francis Escudero disagreed, and said opposition lawmakers would go ahead with a new complaint now.

More complaints

Last year's complaints were mainly initiated by opposition lawmakers. The new case will be lodged by several private groups, including human rights organizations, and will include additional charges, Escudero said.

Opposition lawmakers have acknowledged they still lack the numbers in the House to automatically send a complaint against Arroyo to the Senate—a bastion of the opposition—for trial.

At least a third of the 235 House members must endorse an impeachment complaint before it can be sent to the Senate, but the opposition controls only 39 seats.

Face the music, Erap dares GMA

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada yesterday challenged President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to face the second impeachment complaint against her if she is innocent.

"Ms Arroyo should not stop that impeachment. Why is she afraid to face the impeachment trial court in the Senate if she has not done anything wrong?" Estrada said in mixed English and Filipino during an ambush interview at the Sandiganbayan where he is facing plunder and perjury charges.

Estrada said Ms Arroyo should follow his lead in letting the impeachment process to proceed stressing that "the country cannot move forward if the truth is kept. The people want to find out the truth. Only the truth will set us free. Anyone who is afraid of the truth is the person who is not qualified to govern."

Estrada, at the same time, greeted his erstwhile friend Ilocos Sur Governor Luis "Chavit" Singson a happy birthday.

"I wish him the best of luck and a happy birthday," Estrada said.

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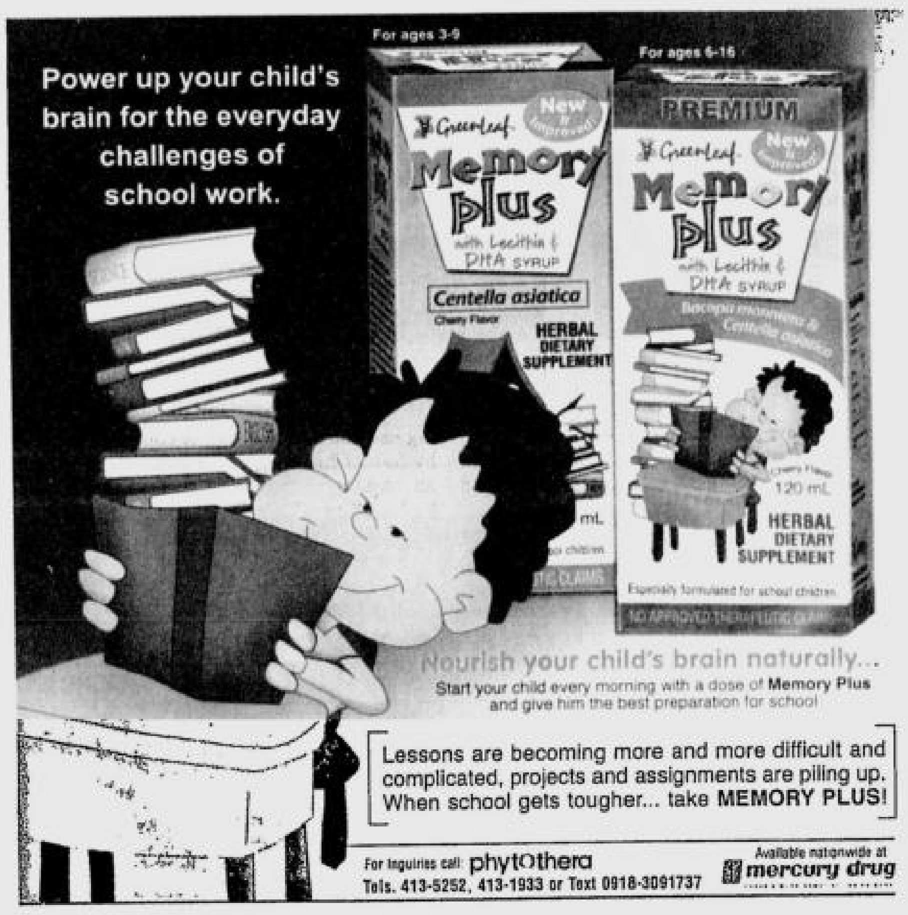
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RP gets Aussie aid vs bird flu

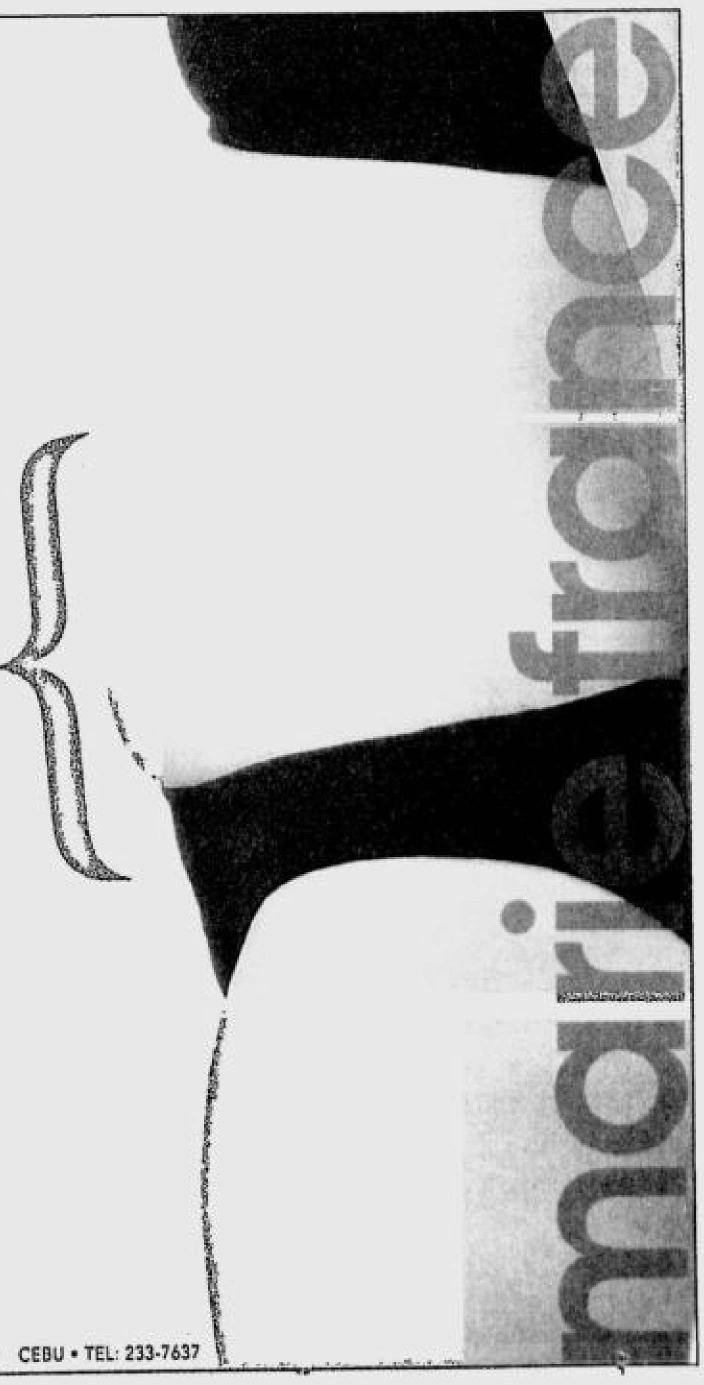
AUSTRALIA HAS EXtended a $4 million grant to the Philippines to fund preparations for natural disasters and a bird flu outbreak, the Australian Embassy announced yesterday.

Angus Macdonald, head of the Australian Agency for International Development in the Philippines, said the new aid will finance urgent mapping of geological hazards, community-based disaster preparedness, technical support for Filipino experts and improve the quick response capacity of the Australian agency in Manila.

The bird flu pandemic preparedness project will provide protective equipment for health workers and help build readiness to control infection, including improving hospitals' response, an embassy statement said.

The Philippines remains free of the H5N1 bird flu virus that has killed at least 130 people worldwide since it began spreading in Asia in late 2003.

The statement said the grant will be disbursed over two years. *AP*



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1.1HP	PRICE NOW	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE JULY 4	PRICE INCREASE	% INCREASE
Standard	15,795	17,076	1,281	8%
Deluxe	16,554	17,899	1,345	8%
Remote	17,374	18,788	1,414	8%

1.5HP	PRICE NOW	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE JULY 4	PRICE INCREASE	% INCREASE
Standard	17,230	18,632	1,402	8%
Deluxe	18,091	19,564	1,473	8%
Remote	19,265	20,837	1,572	8%

2.0HP	PRICE NOW	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE JULY 4	PRICE INCREASE	% INCREASE
Standard	21,587	23,355	1,768	8%
Deluxe	22,104	23,914	1,810	8%
Remote	23,052	24,941	1,889	8%

2.5HP	PRICE NOW	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE JULY 4	PRICE INCREASE	% INCREASE
Standard	24,672	26,649	1,977	8%
Deluxe	25,430	27,472	2,042	8%
Remote	26,245	28,355	2,110	8%

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1.5 hp	30,238	32,742	2,504	8%
2.0 hp	38,438	41,527	3,089	8%
2.5 hp	42,538	45,956	3,418	8%

Alpha

HP	PRICE NOW	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE JULY 4	PRICE INCREASE	% INCREASE
1.0 hp	22,038	23,850	1,812	8%
1.5 hp	25,113	27,160	2,047	8%
2.0 hp	33,313	35,982	2,669	8%
2.5 hp	39,975	43,183	3,208	8%

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Job fair for 'differently abled' soldiers

From page A1

To date, the event is the most significant project of Kapagdaka (Kapakanan at Gabay sa Dating Kaanyuan), the DND office created more than a decade ago to help disabled soldiers.

The impact of the President's declaration of an all-out war against communist insurgents last week just days before the job fair was not lost on Galvez.

Promises should be kept

The son of a retired Army general, Galvez said that to keep morale high in this fight against insurgents, the government should assure soldiers it would take care of them if anything happened to them in the battlefield.

"When they are recruited, (government) tells them, 'We'll take care of you.' But are we, really?" said Galvez, 32. Soldiers lack equipment and protective gear, he said. "From a doctor's point of view, our soldiers are really in danger. We have to stand by our promises to them."

Losing limbs, eyesight and often self-esteem, only to be left alone by the military, is an indescribable traumatic experience, said Col. Rolando Jungco, chief of the AFP morale and welfare division.

"They are your fighting machines. Then they get injured. Suddenly, they lose their skills and they feel worthless," Jungco said.

'Differently abled'

Jungco said a computer literacy program or training in medical transcriptions or call centers was among the feasible programs for what the colonel would rather call "differently abled soldiers."

Galvez said that Kapagdaka was also looking into long-term programs, such as retraining, setting up a convalescence home and providing livelihood programs for their families.

Most of the disabled come from the Army and the Marines, the battle front-liners. Many of them were only in their early 20s when they ended up as amputees, deaf or blind.

There's little information from government files, but Kapagdaka was able to track down and notify 2,775 disabled soldiers about the job fair. Only 10 percent of the number remains in active service, said Capt. Epifanio Gaminde IV, Kapagdaka special projects officer.

Gaminde, a 37-year-old Scout Ranger, has been confined to a wheelchair for nearly a decade after a Moro insurgent sniper shot and hit him in the spinal cord in an encounter in Sultan sa Barongis, Maguindanao, on Dec. 9, 1996.

No money for prosthesis

He is among the five handicapped soldiers working at the DND since last year under a modest project Galvez initiated.

Army Capt. Lorenzo Batalla Jr., currently the oldest Army captain at 45, is Kapagdaka administrative officer. He walks with a cane and brings around a colostomy bag, after a bullet pierced his spinal cord.

Army Corporals Edgar Centus and Danilo Laguitan, both 32 years old, are now with the DND public affairs office, monitoring broadcast news. Both lost a leg in battle zones in 2002. Both walk with artificial legs donated by a congressman. The DND or the AFP does not have the budget for prosthesis or the replacement of a part of the body with an artificial device.

Retired Army Col. Esmeraldo Romano, a Kapagdaka pioneer and now head of the Kapisanan ng mga Sundalong May Kapansanan Inc. (KSKPI), stressed the need for disabled soldiers' "retooling" to equip them for jobs outside the AFP.

New skills required

"I think the President is too forward looking without seeing the basic problem that soldiers need to be trained with new skills according to their disabilities," Romano said.

A graduate of the Philippine Military Academy Class '72, Romano was a 23-year-old lieutenant when he was shot in the head, paralyzing the right side of his body.

At the KSKPI, which also runs a cooperative for disabled soldiers, nine amputees are doing office work. Now in their late 30s or early 40s, these army enlisted men were wounded in action while in their 20s and were separated from the service.

They get a minimal pay to supplement an equally meager pension of P1,700 a month.

New challenges

Despite the feeling of being shortchanged, these soldiers view their disabilities as new challenges. They maintain that their sacrifices were worth it because they fought for the country. They also said such a fate came with being soldiers.

Gaminde said their disability should even encourage soldiers in a similar situation to find ways to prove their worth.

Gaminde, who received a Gold Cross for the Maguindanao encounter, himself took up a master's degree in public management at the University of the Philippines.

It's a matter of perspective, he said, and having a solid support from the soldier's family.

There were several disabled soldiers who committed suicide. Others had been left by their wives, while some ended up as mendicants, Gaminde said.

Most of them do their best to fight off Complete Disability Discharge (CDD), which essentially told a battle-scarred soldier that he was no longer needed.

Those who remain in the military face setbacks in promotions.

"My career as a soldier may be over, but not my career as a father and husband. I still have to provide for my family," said Gaminde, whose children were only one and two years old when he was shot by an enemy.

No crying in corner

Romano added that they at the KSKPI could have chosen to just cry in one corner.

"But we didn't. Despite getting practically nothing from the military and the government, we opted to go on with our lives," he said.

Gaminde said: "It was our choice to become soldiers. We know the sacrifices we would have to make. We can't complain. We should accept it, live by it. It's as simple as that."

But for Galvez, it is still the government's "moral obligation to release soldiers from the service as productive and responsible citizens."

ONE-ARMED S/Sgt. Henry Tuyay (left) is now a paid volunteer in charge of membership of the Kapisanan ng mga Sundalong may Kapansanan Inc. Air Force Sgt. Adolfo Arcilla, who's still in active service, applies for membership. At right, Cpl. Edgar Centus walks on an artificial leg, but he is still on active duty working at the defense department as a media monitor.

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Bulacan gov slams Palparan's one-man army

From page A1

the Army's 7th Infantry Division.

In an interview with the INQUIRER on Tuesday, De la Cruz said the enlisted man was the "right-hand man" of Palparan.

She identified him as M/Sgt. Rizal Hilario, "alias Rollie Castillo, the *berdugo* (butcher) of General Palparan."

The operations of Hilario/Castillo's group have apparently been going on even before President Macapagal-Arroyo announced her administration's all-out war against communist insurgents.

De la Cruz said Bulacan residents had complained about Hilario/Castillo's abusive behavior as early as January, or about four months after Palparan assumed command of the 7th ID.

Militant groups have attributed to Palparan some 500 cases of human rights abuses in Central Luzon, Samar and Mindoro.

De la Cruz said the other two groups were the 56th Infantry Battalion under Lt. Col. Noel Clement and a "shadowy" band that she had yet to unmask.

She said she had earlier raised the issue of Hilario with Clement, thinking that the latter would be in a position to discipline the enlisted man.

But De la Cruz was surprised when Clement, the highest ranking military officer in Bulacan, said he had no authority over Hilario.

"This is dangerous. Hilario goes around using aliases, does not even wear the military uniform, and he reports only to one person—General Palparan," the governor said.

Detachments

In both Bulacan and Pampanga, day care centers or barangay halls are being used as "detachments" by soldiers deployed by Palparan to urban areas suspected as rebel lairs, said leaders of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan).

Village officials in Mabalacat town and in the cities of Angeles and San Fernando in Pampanga confirmed the soldiers' use of the facilities—but only as sleeping quarters, they said.

The officials asked not to be named, saying the military might think they were siding with leftist groups.

They said the soldiers had asked for their permission to use the barangay halls.

"How can you say no to the military, especially when they identify themselves to be with General Palparan?" a village official said.

The officials also said the soldiers were not using the facilities as offices or for storing firearms and bullets.

Palparan did not deny the reports.

"*Maaaring mayroong ganoon* (That could happen)," he said when reached yesterday on his mobile phone. "But that's only temporary, and with the approval of barangay captains."

Palparan said his troops were resorting to using the facilities for lack of operational funds.

"When I have the money, I would get them a place to rent," he said.

24th Infantry Battalion

De la Cruz said she had had to verify Hilario's unit and identity on her own. She said the Army had confirmed that Hilario was assigned with the 24th Infantry Battalion.

She also said Hilario's last known address was 40 Ramos St., San Jose City, Nueva Ecija.

"You can be sure that every time he leaves Nueva Ecija, people will disappear in Bulacan," the governor said.

The 24th IB is one of six battalions under Palparan's 7th ID. It is based in Bataan, but some of its troops have been reported operating in Bulacan and even in Nueva Ecija, or wherever Palparan deploys them.

In March, the Bulacan provincial board passed a resolution urging Palparan to pull out Hilario/Castillo after residents of several towns identified him as the leader of the military team that raided their homes.

De la Cruz said the provincial government wanted to ban Hilario "to allay the fears of witnesses attending public hearings to investigate the killings and violence that have rocked the towns of San Ildefonso, San Miguel and Norzagaray and Malolos City" since Palparan became 7th ID chief.

The governor cited "actual reports and community dialogues" singling out Hilario for his "abusive acts."

She said Hilario had also been "linked" to the Feb. 1 massacre of five farm workers at the CV Tamayo Farms in Barangay Pinaod, San Ildefonso, but that a formal investigation could not be carried out.

According to Provincial Board Member Erning Sulit, who was assigned to conduct the inquiry, the witnesses begged off from testifying, saying they were content to have survived their ordeal.

Sulit said "Ka Rollie" had established a "base" in Pinaod, "near the site of the massacre."

A fact-finding report of the human rights group Karapatan quoted the account of Melanie Cardinal, wife of one of the farm workers.

Cardinal said that on the evening of Feb. 1, 12 men in fatigues and ski masks arrived at the farm looking for the owners and workers.

She said the armed men herded her into a room from where she heard gunshots.

But in a dialogue between Palparan and Bulacan officials led by Rep. Lorna Silverio, the general denied his men's involvement. He said robbery was the motive for the killings.

Climate of fear

Col. Ricardo Visaya, commander of the Pampanga-based 69th IB, said his soldiers were going from house to house for an "information drive" or to verify the identities of civilians with suspected ties to rebels.

But Bayan-Central Luzon chair Roman Polintan said public facilities built for use by civilians should never be used for military operations.

He said the presence of soldiers in villages was creating a "climate of fear or terror" or "a semblance of an abnormal situation, as if there's martial rule."

He pointed out that soldiers were roaming the villages in full battle gear.

Bayan members also reported that "in many cases," soldiers were entering houses without the owners' permission. "They just enter without a word, without any show of courtesy," said a member in Angeles.

During village meetings, soldiers had reportedly been showing video footage of protest rallies and asking residents to identify the local organizers or leaders. Once they get the names, troops are sent out to look for the people concerned.

In several instances, soldiers show up bearing a list of suspected rebels or rebel sympathizers, Bayan members said.

"The targets are the progressives, not the armed fighters," said a labor organizer, who had been invited for questioning.

"Those who refused to meet the soldiers or were simply not in the villages at the time they were invited have been put on the wanted list. Their relatives are being forced to say where they are," the organizer said.

But Palparan said leftists were "making lots of noises" against the presence of government forces because their activities were being hampered.

"If they have nothing to be afraid of, why are they protesting our presence?" he said.

Adjusting targets

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Genoroso Senga said the military was now modifying its campaign plan in order to meet the government's timetable to lick the insurgency.

"We will adjust our objectives, targets and priorities, and these are all designed so that we can accelerate the operations," he said, adding:

"We shall make good use of the additional funds that are being given to us. We are confident that given the assistance and support of other agencies of government, and even the general populace, we can accomplish this."

Senga also said it was unfair for militant groups to say that the P1-billion fund allotted for the all-out war was a "murder fund."

"We are doing counterinsurgency operations so that we can accelerate socio-economic development," he said.

Not zero

But Col. Tristan Kison, head of the AFP public information office, said it could not reduce the communist New People's Army's strength to "zero" despite the P1-billion fund and additional troops.

"We cannot decimate the enemy to zero, but we should be able to bring down [its] operational capability to an insignificant level," Kison said.

What may be considered an "insignificant level" is up to security officials, he said.

The latest military estimate of NPA strength is 7,400 armed members who are concentrated in Luzon.

On June 16, Ms Arroyo announced in Cauayan, Isabela, the release of P1 billion to the military and police with orders, according to her chief of staff Michael Defensor, to finish off the 37-year-old insurgency in "critical areas" in two years.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. later said the military would aim to dramatically reduce NPA presence in the critical areas of Central Luzon, Southern Luzon and Sorsogon province within the next two years.

But he maintained his original timetable of "six to 10 years" of finishing off the insurgency. *With a report from Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

Puno seeks equal role for PNP

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALdo Puno yesterday said he was asking President Arroyo to issue two executive orders that would have the Philippine National Police playing an equal role with the Armed Forces in the anti-insurgency campaign, and deputizing barangay officials, particularly barangay tanod, to assist in the drive.

Puno said he was seeking an active role for the PNP because communist insurgents were continuing to attack police stations in remote areas.

"Our principal concerns will be defense. We want to defend our far-reaching police stations ... so we will protect our outlying stations first and then intensify our community relations' group efforts," he told reporters after attending the awarding ceremonies of the Search for Best Peace and Order Councils in Malacañang.

"The police participation in the anti-insurgency campaign will focus on community relations rather than military operations because we are a civilian agency and we do not want, as much as possible, to take part in shooting," he added.

But according to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Republic Act No. 8551 already "established the delineation of functions between the PNP and the AFP in the anti-insurgency campaign."

Under the law, the PNP is in charge of internal security operations in remote barangays, but if the police are attacked, then the military comes in, Ermita told reporters.

"We don't know whether there is still a necessity [for an EO on this matter]," he said, adding that he would suggest that Puno review the law.

Good idea

Ermita, however, said the proposal for the PNP to deputize barangay tanod in the campaign was a good idea.

Puno said the government would not arm the barangay tanod but enlist their assistance in community efforts "at trying to educate our barangays and, of course, trying to assist our authorities also."

But Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca cautioned the government against deputizing barangay tanod for intelligence work.

"I don't know if the people in the barangay will agree to this," she told reporters. "For projects, OK; but for intelligence, *mainit doon* (that's a hot issue)."

Asked whether she supported the government's all-out war against communists, Padaca said the government should make sure that this would be complemented by "all-out development."

Corrections

IN THE JUNE 15 ISSUE, an Across the Nation story on Page A14—"Quezon flood victims see hope in jethropa"—misstated the name of a plant used as an alternative to fossil fuels. Also known as "tuba-tubang silangan," the plant is called jatropha—not jethropa.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 17 ISSUE, a news story on Page A5—"GMA to sign repeal of death penalty on eve of Vatican trip"—misstated the name of the president of Spain. Spain's president is Jose Luis Rodriguez—not Gonzales—Zapatero.

* * *

IN LATER EDITIONS of the June 17 issue, a front-page story carried the erroneous headline—"693 cases filed all over RP; Joma says cover-up." The number "693" refers to the number of atrocities allegedly committed by the New People's Army since 2003—not the number of cases the government has begun filing against Jose Ma. "Joma" Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 18 ISSUE, an Across the Nation story on Page A20—"DENR tags 190 villages in Leyte landslide prone"—contained erroneous figures from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of the Department of Natural Resources.

The article misstated the total number of villages in Leyte. The province has 1,366—not 1,346—villages.

The number of villages with moderate to high degrees of susceptibility to landslides should have been 344—not 190, according to a clarification by the MGB.

The MGB also said that a total of 109—not 117—villages were considered highly susceptible to landslides; 235—not 240—villages moderately susceptible, and 247—not 34—villages with low susceptibility.

The article also misstated that 739 villages were not susceptible to landslides. The MGB did not make an assessment of these villages regarding their susceptibility to landslides. Actually, the MGB said that no such assessment was made in 775 villages.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 19 ISSUE, the front-page banner story—"Loss of lives unavoidable, says Gonzalez"—carried the erroneous drop head—"Church activist shot dead in Oroquieta." Tito Marata was not a Church activist since he was not a provincial officer of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines. The murdered activist was the public information officer of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas in Western Mindanao.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 20 ISSUE, a caption accompanying a photo on Page A15—"Lullaby"—misstated the place in Baguio City where the picture of a napping father and his child was taken. The photo was taken at Malcolm Square—not at Burnham Park.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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NPA 'taxpayers' warned

From page A1

He did not give a ballpark figure, but he acknowledged that the money raised by the NPA from local sources could run to millions of pesos.

The military had estimated that the NPA was collecting at least P30 million a month in revolutionary taxes in Mindanao, P20 million a month in Central Luzon and about the same amount in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon.

Ermita said the communist rebels were already bleeding financially since it was tagged a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union a few years ago.

After being labeled a terrorist group, the CPP-NPA lost funding from foreign donors, especially those coming from Europe, according to Ermita.

"That's what we told our foreign ambassadors that it was such a big thing that the CPP-NPA was included in the list of terrorist organizations," he said. "This brought awareness to European governments and nongovernment organizations that the money they are sending are being channeled for use to something else other than what's good."

Human rights advocacy

Before the terrorist label, the CPP-NPA was able to get funding from foreign donors through the group's "propaganda" that it needed to promote human rights advocacy in response to the government's alleged human rights violations, Ermita said.

Aside from moving to cut the sources of funding of the NPA, Malacañang has started doing propaganda work to gain public support for its renewed drive against communist rebels.

Ermita told reporters that officials met the other day with the Commission on Human Rights to discuss the accomplishments of the government-created Task Force Usig.

The task force is investigating the spate of killings of leftist activists and journalists in the country.

At least 232 militants have been killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001, while 44 media people were killed during the period.

Human rights groups and some Church leaders claim that government forces are behind the killings.

Meeting with bishops

Ermita said another group of officials led by PNP Deputy Director General Avelino Razon met with some members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines to assure them that the government was doing everything to improve the peace and order.

"[And to assure them that the government] has nothing to do with the spate of killings," he said.

Ermita said the intelligence community was now saying that "there are many indications that show they (NPA) are the ones doing the purging among their ranks."

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Recycled budget gives GMA P48B

From page A1

Non-repeating projects are budget items that have been completed and fully financed under the 2005 budget. They include the P96 million earmarked for the integration into the military of former members of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army, the P20 million for the Tumana Bridge in Marikina City, and the P10 million for the Marala bridge in Navotas. These items have no allocations in the proposed 2006 budget.

Savings from debt payment

The source said the government also realized P27 billion in savings, the difference between the budgeted and actual interest payments in 2005.

The stronger peso, the drop in interest rates and better-than-expected revenue collection have cut the country's interest payments below budget levels, giving the President more discretionary funds, according to the economic manager.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya confirmed that Ms Arroyo would gain access to P21 billion from nonrepeating projects under a reenacted budget and that its disbursement was practically up to the President.

P1B for military

Andaya said the P1 billion that the President had earmarked for the military and police campaign to wipe out the communist insurgency in northern, central and southern Luzon in two years would come from the P21 billion under a reenacted budget.

Not all of the P21 billion will be spent on new undertakings because there are items not covered by a reenacted budget such as higher operating and maintenance costs, the budget secretary said in a phone interview.

For example, last year's budget covered the salaries of newly hired teachers for only six months and the government has to pay for their full-year salary this year.

Interest payments

"So it's not necessarily true that all of the P21 billion will be discretionary," said Andaya, the chair of the House appropriations committee before he was named budget secretary.

He, however, disputed the claim that the President would take control of the P27.7 billion in savings from interest payments.

No actual cash savings

"You cannot translate that because interest payments are automatically appropriated. There are no actual cash savings," the budget secretary said.

The Senate had proposed a total of P63.7 billion in cuts from the 2006 budget—P26 billion from the P676 billion in programmed spending for government agencies, including the Office of the President, and P37.7 billion from the P57 billion in unprogrammed funds (money on stand by for emergency purposes).

The P26-billion cut in programmed funds include the P3-billion Kilos Asenso Support Fund and the P3.69-billion Kalayaan Barangay Fund that some senators believe would be used by the President to push for Charter change among local government units.

Ms Arroyo herself had indicated that the interest savings would be the source of the multibillion-peso funds she disbursed for agriculture, infrastructure, education and health services.

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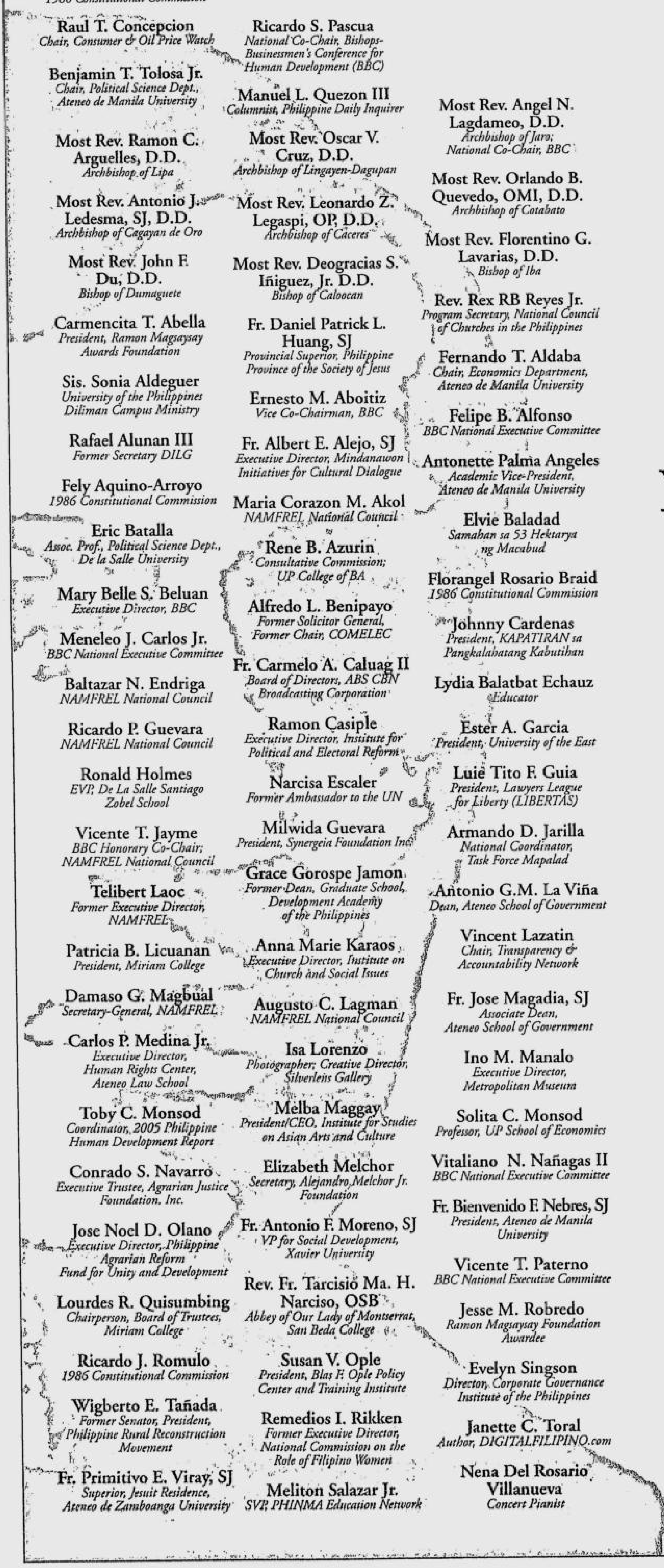

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We don't need a Constitution that would:

- Take away our right to vote directly for the President
- Create a powerful Interim Parliament composed of incumbent politicians that would decide whether the 2007 elections will be held or not
- Create a super-President with additional Prime Minister powers
- Open the door for those in power to stay on indefinitely
- Weaken the Supreme Court as a check against martial law, abuse of power and violation of human rights

These proposals take away power from the people and hand it over to those who already have too much of it.

Constitutional reforms are best done through a more transparent Constitutional Convention after the 2007 elections, where any changes will not benefit those in power today.

WE NEED REAL CHANGE.

We need a strong social reform program now.

This program requires a sharper focus and visible action on safety nets for the poor, especially in the areas of education, food security, health and housing; strict implementation of agrarian reform and environmental laws; a serious and sustained fight against graft and corruption; and increased representation in Congress and local governments for marginalized sectors.

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Chinese officers observe US military exercises

ABOARD THE USS RONALD Reagan—Now that China has seen some of the United States' most powerful naval hardware—a state-of-the-art aircraft carrier—in action, US military leaders are hoping it will be their turn next.

"I think that would be the logical step," said Capt. Terry Kraft, who this week showed a 10-member delegation of senior Chinese military officers around the USS Ronald Reagan. They were on the Reagan for about 24 hours.

The visit marked the first time the Chinese military had been invited to observe US military exercises firsthand.

"We showed them everything we do from top to bottom," Kraft said Wednesday. "We gave them a very good, transparent look at how we do operations out here."

They had a lot to see.

Largest since Viet war

The Reagan is one of three carriers operating off the tiny US Pacific territory of Guam in the largest exercise America has held in this part of the world since the Vietnam War. Some 30 ships, 280 aircraft and 22,000 troops are participating in the five-day war games, which end Friday.

American officials are hoping the invitation to the Chinese will lead to better relations between their two militaries, which cooled after the capture of a US spy plane in 2001. The Pentagon has in recent months expressed concern over China's double-digit growth in military spending and has criticized Beijing for its lack of transparency.

Hoping to be invited

Kraft said he did not know of any specific plan for the Chinese to reciprocate. But he said he was hopeful an invitation would be forthcoming.

"I would jump at the chance to go aboard a Chinese ship," he said.

China's official media was also describing the visit as part of an exchange.

"The invitation to observe the US military exercises is a very important component of exchanges between the militaries of China and the United States," the Xinhua news agency on Tuesday quoted an unidentified defense ministry official as saying.

Kraft said the Chinese delegation included a navy admiral, two air force generals and five other officers, along with an interpreter and a state TV cameraman.

"They were very interested in everything," he said.

China, which is already boosting its submarine fleet, is reportedly considering adding aircraft carriers to its navy, a move which would significantly expand its capability to project its military power in the region.

Kraft said he believed the delegation was impressed by the Reagan. But he refused to comment on whether Beijing might benefit from having one of its own.

'Valiant Shield'

Along with the Reagan, the USS Kitty Hawk and Abraham Lincoln carrier strike groups were joining the exercises, dubbed "Valiant Shield." Air force fighters and B-2 bombers operating out of Guam's Andersen Air Force Base were also participating.

"We're hoping that by allowing them to come out and observe some of our exercises here, that they get a better feel for how we operate," he said.

Representatives from Japan, Australia, South Korea, Russia and Singapore were also invited to attend.

From sea to cyberspace

Officials refuse to comment on the operational specifics of the exercises, but say they cover the "full spectrum" of training for potential threats, from undersea warfare to controlling cyberspace. *AP*

NPA declares ceasefire in Mt. Bulusan villages

From page A1

The assurance was relayed to the INQUIRER by "Samuel Guerrero," the alias used by the spokesperson of the NPA Celso Minguez Command, which oversees all rebel operations in Sorsogon.

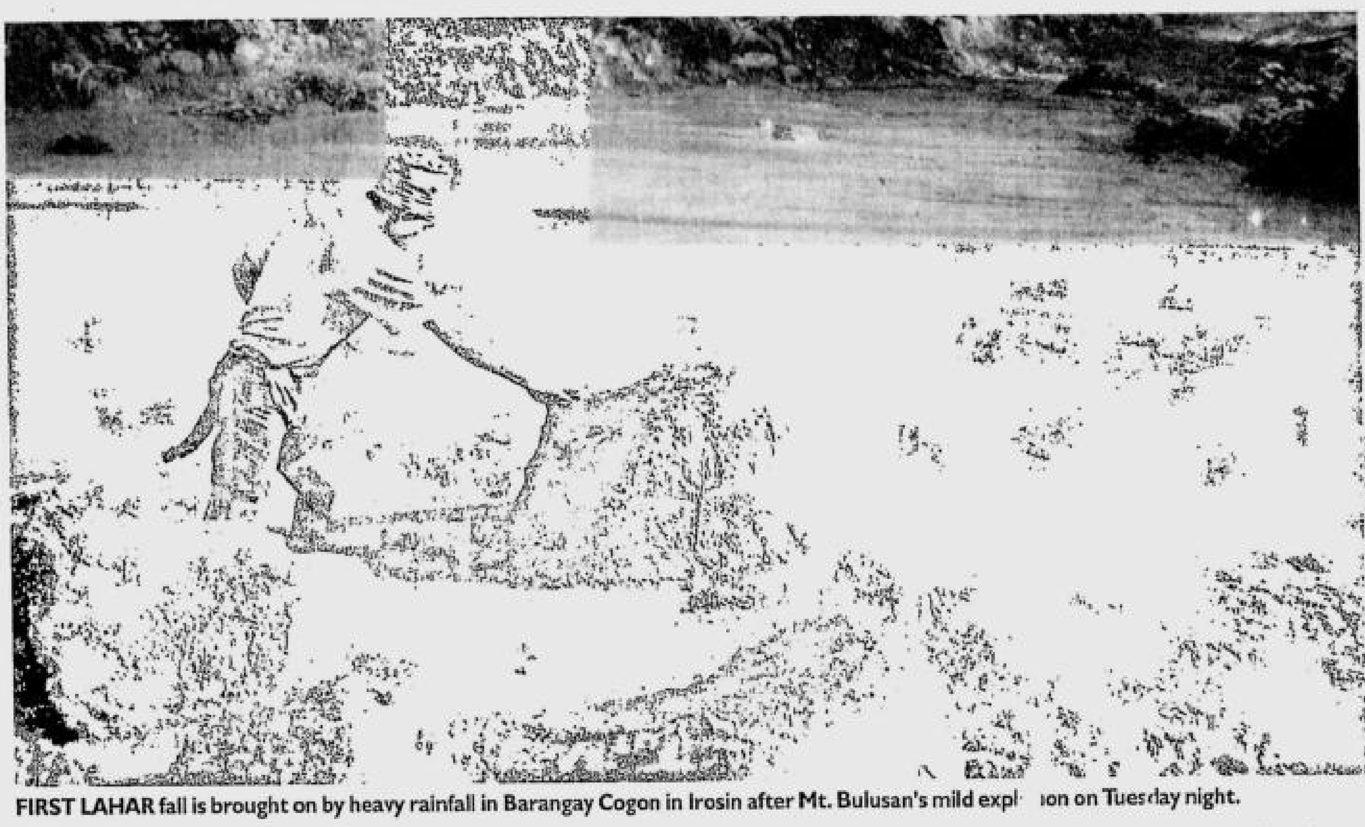
The Arroyo administration earlier announced that Sorsogon would be a focus, along with other Luzon provinces, of stepped-up military operations and development aid aimed at defeating the rebels in these areas in two years.

Guerrero said the Celso Minguez Command had ordered its cadres and guerrillas in the province not to harm military and police personnel engaged in relief work and evacuation of villagers in the towns of Irosin, Juban and Casiguran.

Earlier Wednesday, the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines said it welcomed a government proposal for a temporary ceasefire around Mount Bulusan, 390 km southeast of Manila.

But the NDF human rights committee chair, Fidel Agcaoili, warned in the same statement that the truce should not be used to bring US troops into the area on the southern tip of Luzon.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, on Tuesday said the government was ready to discuss possible cooperation with communist guerrillas around Bulusan despite her order last week for a new all-out offensive against the NPA, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.



NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

FIRST LAHAR fall is brought on by heavy rainfall in Barangay Cogon in Irosin after Mt. Bulusan's mild explosion on Tuesday night.

"We welcome the request of Mike Defensor ... for a mutual ceasefire between the Armed Forces and the NDFP in connection with the expected eruption of Mount Bulusan," Agcaoili said in a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER from The Netherlands, where he and other communist leaders have been on self-exile.

He said the NPA guerrillas would observe a cessation of hostilities in Bulusan, Casiguran and Juban while relief efforts were ongoing and until it was safe for displaced families to return to their homes.

NDF warning

According to Agcaoili, communist rebels themselves and their allies are also assisting people living around Bulusan.

The NDF senior official, however, warned that the ceasefire "should not be used as a license by the Armed Forces ... to swamp the affected areas with armed troops," and "should also not be used as a license by the US to bring in military forces to disaster-affected areas in the guise of humanitarian relief."

In the past, American troops deployed for counterterrorism training have rushed to help Philippine authorities struggling with mudslides and other natural calamities.

Agcaoili said NPA guerrillas, who have been waging a 37-year-old Maoist insurgency, were ready to accept the ceasefire offer on humanitarian grounds, despite "the Arroyo regime's current act of hostility against the revolutionary movement."

Armed forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga described the NDF statement as "welcome news" as troops continued to assist families around the volcano.

Communist guerrillas have recently attacked troops near the 1,565-meter mountain, which began emitting steam and ash in late March, triggering the evacuation of several dozen families.

Fresh explosion

On Tuesday night, Bulusan spewed ash in a fresh explosion, prompting officials to evacuate at least 44 families in Casiguran's Barangay Mabini.

Mayor Edwin Hamor said the evacuees were brought to the Casiguran National Technical High School. They returned to their homes on Wednesday afternoon.

The minor ash explosion, Bulusan's ninth the past three months, was accompanied by mild tremors for about 17 minutes before the volcano calmed down again.

In its bulletin, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said ash and steam emissions coincided with heavy rains that generated lahar and muddy stream flows on the volcano's slopes.

No imminent major eruption

Despite such activity, there is no indication that a major eruption is imminent, according to Phivolcs.

Even so, Ms Arroyo has ordered the evacuation of some 20,000 families living within the volcano's 4-km radius to ensure there would be no casualty in case of an eruption.

Communist rebels, who claim to have a presence in nearly 70 of the country's 79 provinces, suspended Norwegian-brokered peace talks with the government two years ago, mainly to protest Manila's refusal to ask the United States and the European Union to remove them from terrorist blacklists.

The military has estimated it would take six to 10 years to wipe out the rebels, but Ms Arroyo last week set a timetable of two years and ordered the release of P1 billion for the counterinsurgency campaign.

The government has long accused the rebels of extortion and economic sabotage. Ms Arroyo has also claimed that communist rebels had teamed up with right-wing elements in the military in a Feb. 24 coup plot that, according to her, would have destroyed democracy in the Philippines if it had succeeded. *With reports from Norman Bordadora, AP and AFP*

'Midnight Cabinet' misses Atong Ang on Chavit's birthday

From page A1

police station and inaugurated five major economic projects for Ilocos Sur.

She has attended all but one of Singson's birthday celebrations in the last five years.

Each member of the Baluarte staff was dressed in a pink shirt with an image of the President printed on the back along with Singson's words: *"Napatneg ti napudno nga kakadwa* (A true friend is important to have)."

Ms Arroyo appeared pleased when a staff member showed her the back of her shirt.

First time

"We're just short of a quorum," said Singson, a mainstay of then President Joseph Estrada's midnight meetings in Malacañang.

"It's the first time we've been together [since Estrada's ouster]," he said.

Estrada's "midnight Cabinet" was believed to have crafted most of his administration's policies.

It was Singson's explosive testimony at Estrada's impeachment trial that led to the fall from power of his former drinking and gambling buddy whom he still calls "Erap."

Singson yesterday told reporters that he was not talking too much with Jimenez and Gatchalian because they were "talking about the billions of pesos that they gave Estrada in the 'Jose Velarde' account."

Birthday greetings from Atong

Singson said Ang, another member of Estrada's midnight Cabinet, had phoned him from the United States to greet him a happy birthday.

"We're in constant touch," the governor said of Ang, who remains under house arrest in Las Vegas on the strength of a Philippine government warrant charging him with plunder. "He is seriously thinking of testifying against Erap."

Estrada also sent a greeting to Singson through a messenger, but the governor dismissed it as "a mere publicity stunt."

More than five years after Estrada's ouster, Singson still nurses a deep grudge against his ex-buddy.

"I still believe that justice should prevail in [Estrada's] case. And I hope it will come sooner than the end of this administration," Singson said.

He said he did not approve of this administration's supposed kowtowing to every request of an accused man like Estrada.

The governor warned that if the administration would insist on cutting a deal with Estrada for the sake of reconciliation, it would lead to its "self-destruction."

'Temporary allies'

Singson said his support for Ms Arroyo was "all the way" despite their differences on the handling of the Estrada case and the communist insurgency ("The government should continue to hold peace talks with the rebels"), and of Charter change ("I don't think shifting to a parliamentary form of government is the answer to our problems").

But he admitted that there was "no such thing as permanent friends," saying that all were "temporary allies in politics."

He said this adage applied to "all politicians, without exception."

"Everything has its limits, like my alliance with Erap. When he tried to kill me, I stopped being his friend. If she (Ms Arroyo) wanted me killed, I'd leave her too," said Singson, who wore a "lucky" bracelet with the molars of an elk he killed on a hunting trip in the United States.

Jimenez

On Tuesday afternoon, Jimenez visited Barangay Ora in nearby Bantay town and doled out money to residents.

A local broadcaster said he witnessed Jimenez handing out P1,000 and P500 bills even to children in the village.

Jimenez is in town because he is an old friend of Singson's, Michael Defensor, Ms Arroyo's chief of staff, said yesterday.

Jimenez also wants to coalesce with the Arroyo administration, Defensor said, adding:

"We can't prevent them (Jimenez and Gatchalian) from coming here. Maybe they want to help us in the [the plunder case against Estrada]."

Defensor also said Jimenez might be seeking the administration's blessings for the 2007 elections.

Money lines

"If they want a coalition, I don't see any problem," Defensor said. "But for the next election, [Jimenez] has to pass through a prescreening committee if he wants to become a senator or whatever."

But Jimenez said he was scared of running for mayor of Manila next year, and not because he was afraid of losing to Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

"Can you imagine how long the lines of people asking for help if I win? There would be a line from City Hall to Caloocan and another line to Cavite, and I'd lose all my money," he said.

"I'd rather use my money in other ways outside of government, like [helping] schools in the uplands," he added.

Asked if he was afraid of Lacson, who had reportedly cast a moist eye on Manila City Hall, Jimenez said: "I can beat him even if I'm asleep."

Jimenez took pains to deny a claim made by Singson earlier in the day that he would seek the top Manila post in 2007.

Singson had told reporters: "I should know that he (Jimenez) is running. I was the one who encouraged and helped him run and win as congressman (6th district, Manila)."

But Singson pointed out that Jimenez did not need Ms Arroyo's endorsement to win as Manila mayor.

"He is already helping the poor," said Singson, who denied that he was acting as a bridge between Jimenez and Ms Arroyo.

'Loving'

Aside from denying rumors of his return to politics, Jimenez stressed that his donations and cash handouts should be seen "as a sign of loving rather than helping other people."

"When you do something out of love, you don't expect anything back. When you help someone, it means you want something in return. I don't want anything from them," he said

But Jimenez was touchy when pressed to disclose his net worth and where he was getting the money he was doling out.

"I don't have money; all of it comes from heaven. Don't scare me. I already came from jail [in the United States, for making illegal contributions to presidential candidates]," he told reporters.

Jimenez said he was not compelled to disclose his net worth because he was a private citizen.

"If you have any problem with that, go to heaven yourself and pray, and God might give you money," he snapped.

Sin's courage recalled on first death anniversary

From page A1

sickly childhood almost kept him from becoming a priest, is widely acknowledged as the driving spirit in the peaceful revolts that ousted Presidents Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Present in the Mass were former President Corazon Aquino, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Fernando Filoni, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban.

The call for vigilance came amid growing concerns over the government's all-out war against the communist insurgency with a funding of P1 billion and a two-year deadline.

Members of the influential Roman Catholic hierarchy earlier expressed concerns that the campaign would lead to more human rights abuses.

Human rights watchdogs counted more than 600 militant group leaders and members who had either been killed or had gone missing since President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office in 2001.

He taught us charity

In a separate statement, Villegas described Sin as someone who was "always brave and ready to fight."

Villegas said his former mentor's courage wasn't simply bravery, but one that came from "his deep faith in God."

"If God is with us, who can be against us?" he said.

Villegas said Sin, who served as Manila archbishop for 29 years, should also be honored for the deep love and compassion he shared throughout his life.

"He taught us charity, not only love, not only eros but (also) agape (unconditional love), and there's no greater agape than to lay down your life for your friends," he said.

Villegas recalled Sin's immense suffering from sickness and old age during the last years of his life.

Debilitating ailment

"We saw the debilitating signs of his ailment," he said. "I had advised him many times to stay at home because to me, it was getting to be a very humiliating experience to go out in public to be carried around, to be pushed in a chair and to be unable to stand."

Still, Villegas said Sin found his way into Eucharistic celebrations and other events, including rallies. "Because for somebody who loves much, nothing is impossible," he said.

"Cardinal Sin is dead, but the charity and the service for which he lived must never be allowed to die," he said.

"It's our turn to follow the footsteps that he has left behind. Let it be a challenge because we need courage. We need more compassion and charity must always prevail."

Int'l liberal democrats open 3-day meet today

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

OVER 100 LIBERAL-DEMOCRAT LEADERS from 30 countries will meet today at the Philippine International Convention Center to discuss economic and security challenges facing their nations, including the series of killings of militant leaders and journalists in the Philippines.

But for what is billed as the biggest ever gathering of international liberal leaders in Manila, the President of the host country will not be the keynote speaker.

Instead, former President Corazon Aquino will deliver the keynote address at the 3-day joint meeting of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), Alliance of Liberals and Democrats from Europe (ALDE) and Liberal International (LI), according to Senate President Franklin Drilon, president of the local Liberal Party and the CALD and host of the meeting. The officials include 30 members of Parliaments, senators, ministers and local and national officials from Asia and Europe.

According to a statement from Drilon's office, Ms Aquino will talk about international migration, particularly the plight of millions of Filipino overseas workers, and the role of liberal-democrats in the face of the economic and security issues in the 21st century. Aquino's martyred husband, former Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. was an LP member and their only son, Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, is the party's current vice chair.

Carmelita G. Perez; 63

CARMELITA PEREZ PASSED AWAY YESTERDAY. She was 63.

She is survived by siblings and their spouses Vee and Rolly Garcia, Emy and Jorge Bustos, Ted and Irma, Joe and Cora, and Resty and Avie. Her remains lie at La Funeraria Paz Sucat, Parañaque City inside the Manila Memorial Park. She will be buried in Masantol, Pampanga, today beside the graves of her parents, Res and Puding Perez, after the 8 a.m. Mass at the La Funeraria Paz Sucat.

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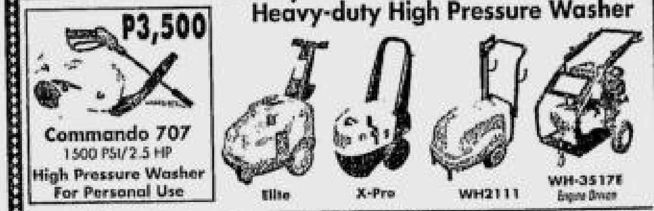

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PR. No.: SCD-05-010055 & ITASD-06-018654

1 The *NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, Head Office Region* (TRANSCO-HO) through the *2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TransCo Board*, intends to apply the sum of *Php 3,404,288.00* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF LABOR AND MATERIALS FOR THE WATERPROOFING OF PMC BUILDING OF SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND THREE (3) REPEATER STATIONS *Reference No.*. PB060519-RM0087/PR No.: SCD-05-010055 & ITASD-06-018654. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

2 The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF REINFORCED THERMOPLASTIC MEMBRANE WATERPROOFING FOR PMC BUILDING OF SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND THREE (3) REPEATER STATIONS. Delivery of the GOODS is required *in sixty (60) days*. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3 Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4 A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below from *June 16, 2006 to July 12, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.* and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of *Php 1,000.00*. The method of payment will be *Cash*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

5. Site Inspection is required prior to the Pre-Bid conference, for details please contact Mr. Arsenio R. Quevedo at Telephone No. 981-4454.

6 The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *June 28, 2006/10:00 a.m.* at *the Admin Conference Room.*

7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before *July 13, 2006/10:00 a.m.* All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	Schedule I: PhP 25,000.00 Schedule II: PhP 9,042.88
2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	Schedule I: PhP 37,500.00 Schedule II: PhP 13,564.32
3 Surety Bond (2.5% of ABC)	Schedule I: PhP 62,500.00 Schedule II: PhP 22,607.20
4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC)	Schedule I: PhP 2,500,000.00 Schedule II: PhP 904,288.00

NOTE: (The sum of Schedules I & II is the amount of Bid Security for bidders who wish to bid for both Schedules)

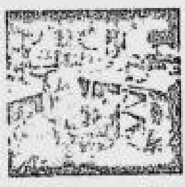
8 Bid opening shall be on *July 13, 2006/10:00 a.m.* at the *Admin Conference Room same address below*. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

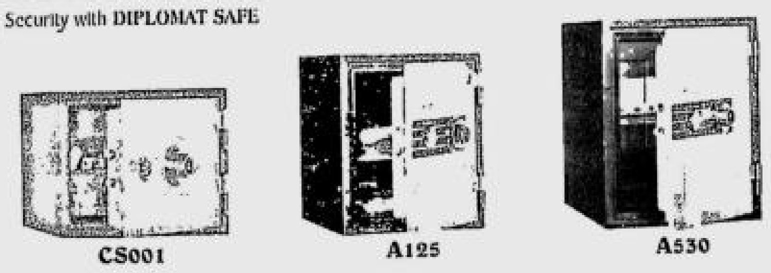
9. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center Complex, BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No.: (632) 981-2206 / Fax No. (632) 922-8432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - June 16 & 22 2006)





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Don't exploit Marines rift, pols told

EVEN AS ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATORS urged the Armed Forces to remain apolitical and warned the opposition not to exploit the resignation of Marine Lt. Col. Orlando de Leon, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel yesterday blamed President Macapagal-Arroyo for her alleged mismanagement of the military.

"[De Leon's] resignation is a terrible indictment of the Commander-in-Chief's mismanagement of the AFP and the corruption of some of its generals that have, in his words, led to the `loss of values' that had characterized the conduct of military officials and men in the past," Pimentel said in a statement.

He said De Leon's charges were "validated by the continuing abuse of power, plunder of the economy and disrespect for the Constitution by the administration of GMA."

De Leon quit last week as the Marine Corps' chief of staff, the third highest position in the service, out of disgust over the supposed politicking in the military. His strongly worded resignation letter was leaked to anti-Arroyo groups and the media.

Despite the harshness of De Leon's comments, however, the Marine Corps leadership has not made any move to subject him to disciplinary action.

"There is no such initiative yet. So far he has not been asked to explain," said Marine spokesperson Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan.

He said Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga was not offended by De Leon's action.

"There's no problem with General Allaga. He's okay. There is no problem," Caculitan said.

Lanao del Sur Rep. Benasing Macarambon said De Leon's resignation was apparently being used by critics of Ms Arroyo, noting reports that his resignation letter was circulated during an opposition impeachment forum at the Manila Polo Club late Monday.

"The ugly head of politics is again creating intrigues among the few and the proud Marine Corps. This matter is internal to the Marines but it is quite mysterious how his resignation letter landed in the hands of anti-Arroyo forces," said Macarambon, vice chair of the House committee on national defense and security.

He said the opposition was apparently planning "something new" against the President in anticipation of their filing of another impeachment complaint against her.

"We've seen this tactic before, in the series of protests up to and during the first impeachment bid, all of which failed," he said.

Leyte Rep. Eduardo Veloso said De Leon's resignation could be used by the opposition to "again project cracks within the military organization or peddle coup stories" to set the stage for the filing of a new impeachment complaint against the President.

Veloso said the AFP rank and file should "ignore opportunists who are out to use them."

He said the AFP "does not need this distraction" especially with the military preparing to launch offensives against the Communist Party and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

But Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, a former defense minister, doubted De Leon's resignation could fan disaffection and trigger a coup or a withdrawal of support.

"One colonel complaining will not mean the government being toppled. No way. The government is not that brittle," he told a Senate press forum.

"Of course, I'm not saying that the government should not do something about it, government ought to look into the problem, but for society to be taken aback or agog by the statement of a light colonel, he must be a Garibaldi or a Napoleon to make us cower," Enrile said. *Philip C. Tubeza, TJ Burgonio and Dona Pazzibugan*

Gringo has no surrender plan—Enrile

By TJ Burgonio

FORMER SEN. GREGORIO "GRINGO" HONASAN has no intention to come out of hiding and turn himself in even though three of his alleged cohorts in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny in Makati City had been arrested.

Honasan, the alleged brains of the mutiny who has managed to elude arrest so far following the arrest of his aides, made this known in a recent talk with Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

"I called him to find out how he is. He said he was all right. Then, he did not (say) that he was going to surrender," Enrile said yesterday when asked in a press forum if the former senator had sent feelers to surrender.

The senator said he called Honasan a few days ago.

Honasan was charged with several others with the crime of coup d'etat in connection with the 2003 mutiny on Feb. 24, the day President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a state of emergency. Warrants for their arrest were issued shortly after.

His co-accused—retired Colonels Romeo Lazo and Virgilio Briones—were arrested separately last Saturday in Quezon City. Both are leaders of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc.

The group's spokesperson, Ernesto Macahiya, was arrested in April in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, also in connection with the mutiny.

Enrile, whose ties with Honasan date back to the Marcos' years when he served as defense minister, said he never gave any advice to his former protege on how to handle the charges and the subsequent manhunt against him.

"I never advised him to do anything. He is mature enough, wise enough, experienced enough to make a decision for himself without any advise from me," he said at the forum.

The police had put up P5 million bounty for Honasan's arrest; P1 million for retired Capt. Felix Turingan and P250,000 for George Duldulao and Lina Reyes, both staffers of the former senator.

On July 27, 2003, a band of disgruntled junior officers took over the Oakwood Premiere in Makati City to protest corruption in the military and demanded the resignation of Ms Arroyo, defense and military officials.

Graft raps filed over Masinloc sale

THE MILITANT BAGONG ALYANSANG Makabayan yesterday filed graft charges against officials of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) for their allegedly questionable sale of the 600-megawatt Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales.

Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said the Masinloc deal was "tainted by corruption" and "a showcase of everything and anything that can go wrong in the government's privatization program for state-owned generating plants."

Named respondents in the complaint filed with the Office of the Ombudsman were Cabinet secretaries on the PSALM board—Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Trade Secretary Peter Favila—and PSALM president Nieves Osorio and Froilan Tampinco, vice president for asset management and electricity trading.

Masinloc, the state-owned National Power Corp.'s biggest coal-fired plant, was won in a bid sale in December 2004 by YNN Pacific, composed of Filipino firm YNN Holdings and Australia's Great Pacific Financial Group, with a winning bid of $561.7 million.

As a sweetener, it was allowed to put down 40 percent of the price and pay the rest within seven years. YNN was given nine months from the date of the deal's announcement to pay the $227 million.

In its complaint, Bayan said the PSALM board had given YNN Pacific "undue concessions" that were disadvantageous to the government.

The most serious of these was the extension of the deadline last December 2005 for YNN to pay $227 million, representing 40 percent of the $561.7 million acquisition price.

Bayan said YNN's failure to meet the December 2005 deadline should have resulted in the forfeiture of the $11.2 million performance bond that it paid.

Instead of forfeiting the bond, however, PSALM gave YNN two extensions, the first on March 31 and the second, on June 30, 2006, reportedly to enable YNN to bring in a new partner, the Malaysian-based Ranhill Power, to infuse capital into the consortium.

"When YNN failed to make the scheduled payments, PSALM officials were duty-bound to have drawn upon the performance bond in favor of the government," Bayan said.

Apart from the controversy surrounding the bidding process, Reye raised another troubling aspect of the sale.

Citing reliable sources, Reyes said YNN was now in an "advanced stage" of negotiations for a power supply contract with the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co., the country's largest distribution utility.

The Masinloc power station, built by Napocor at a cost of $530 million in 1998, is a so-called merchant plant that does not hold any long-term power purchase agreements (PPAs) providing revenue guarantees. It means there would be no guaranteed market for the power it produces.

The consortium is trying to sign a PPA with Meralco because it was a condition of the Ranhill buy-out, Reyes said.

Ranhill recently bought out its partners in the YNN consortium for $8 million. By doing so, it also assumed the responsibility of coughing up the $227 million.

Again citing reliable sources, Reyes said that in exchange for agreeing to enter into a supply agreement with YNN, Meralco would be granted a rate increase as well as a favorable resolution of its P20-billion settlement case with Napocor.

Reyes said he did not think it was coincidence that the Energy Regulatory Commission has scheduled a hearing for a Meralco hike petition on June 27, just a few days before the deadline for the YNN payment for the Masinloc plant.

"We want to know if government is pressuring Meralco to save the Masinloc deal through a supply contract with YNN or if Meralco is just riding on the issue so it can advance its own business interests," said Reyes. Abigail Ho with a report from Philip C. Tubeza and Tonertte Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Napocor must pay taxes—SC

By Armand Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY ruled that National Power Corporation (Napocor) was not exempt from paying the franchise tax.

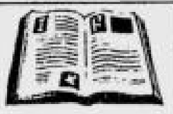
In a 13-page decision, the SC First Division upheld the Oct. 21, 2004 decision of the Court of Appeals declaring that the Napocor was liable for the payment of franchise tax under the Local Government Code (LGC).

The high court also ordered the state power firm to immediately deposit the amount of P7.1 million in escrow with the Land Bank of the Philippines pending determination as to which province, Isabela or Ifugao, was entitled to the franchise tax.

The decision penned by Associate Justice Romeo Callejo, Sr. cited the case of Napocor v. City of Cabanatuan.

In that case, Napocor also refused to pay franchise tax to the City of Cabanatuan by invoking the tax exemption provided under its charter.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Thursday, June 22, 2006
11th Week in Ordinary Time
Paulinus of Nola / John Fisher and
Thomas More

1st Reading: Sir 48:1-14
Gospel: Matthew 6:7-15

Jesus said to his disciples, "When you pray, do not use a lot of words, as the pagans do, for they hold that the more they say, the more chance they have of being heard. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need, even before you ask him.

This, then, is how you should pray:
Our Father in heaven,
holy be your name,
your kingdom come
and your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts
just as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.
Do not bring us to the test
but deliver us from the evil one.

If you forgive others their wrongs, your Father in heaven will also forgive yours. If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive you either."

Commentary

We hear of the power of Elijah—the force of the Word of God in his mouth—his fire and passion for God that could take down kings, bring the dead back to life; that has anointed kings and taken him aloft into the whirlwind and to come again before the Prophet that is the Word of God made flesh among us. And we hear of Elisha who carried on that word and power among the people. But we have one beyond compare, the beloved Son of the Most High God, who teaches us to call God our Father and prays for the kingdom of peace with justice; for the will of God for all life to flourish, for bread, for forgiveness and deliverance. But it all begins and ends in forgiveness, the deep face of God in Jesus.

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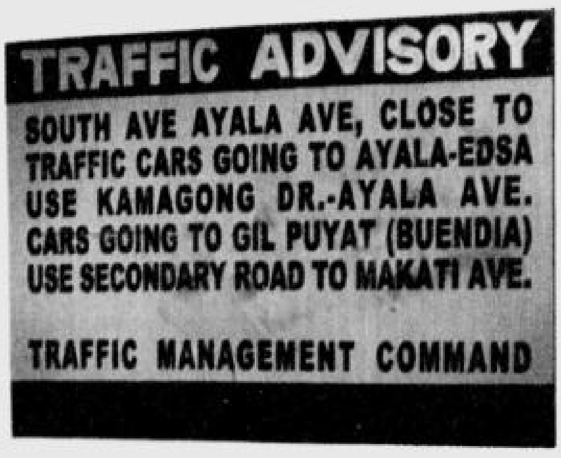
GE Money Bank
A Savings Bank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TRAFFIC CARS GOING TO AYALA-EDSA
USE KAMAGONG DR.-AYALA AVE.
CARS GOING TO GIL PUYAT (BUENDIA)
USE SECONDARY ROAD TO MAKATI AVE.
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMAND

GE imagination at work

Rebels seize 2 Pinoy oil workers in Nigeria

NIGERIA—TWO FILIPINO OIL WORKERS were kidnapped on Tuesday near the Nigerian oil city of Port Harcourt in the southern Niger Delta, officials said.

"It happened around noon today. The two are contract staff of PGS (Petroleum Geo-Services). They are workers of Bulford International," a spokesperson for PGS told AFP by telephone from Oslo.

"Six armed men came in a boat and abducted the two Filipinos. They were not harmed or injured. We have no contact with them since the sad incident took place," he said.

"We are also making efforts to establish contacts with the abductors," said the official, who asked not to be named.

National police spokesperson Haz Iwendi confirmed to AFP: "The two men were on the platform when they were captured at about noon today. There was no attack as such, according to available information so far."

"No group has yet claimed responsibility for the hostage-taking," he added.

The Nigerian navy said the kidnapping had taken place in Aker district, about 10 kilometers southwest of Port Harcourt.

Established in 1991, PGS specializes in onshore oil and petroleum production and marine geophysics, and has 2,800 permanent workers, according to its official website (www.pgs.com).

Freed unharmed

Since the beginning of this year, 31 foreign oil workers, including the two Filipinos, have been kidnapped in the Niger Delta.

All previous 29 captives have been released without harm after periods of detention ranging from several days to several weeks.

The Nigerian navy, which has lost several men in attacks by separatists against oil workers and oil installations, has tried to reinforce security in the region but the attacks continue unabated.

"We are surprised that they did not inform the navy of their movement plans," a senior naval officer told AFP of the Filipinos.

"The procedure is that we would provide an escort, therefore (there is a) need that we are informed of their movements. We are curious to know why they did not inform us, like other oil companies do," he added.

The Niger Delta, the main center of oil production in Nigeria, is a swathe of swamps of 74,000 square kilometers, where more than 3,500 oil and gas installations are located.

The Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), an armed separatist group in the region, has claimed responsibility for most of the attacks there since January.

The militant group is demanding that a larger share of the region's oil revenues be returned to the local population.

MEND kidnapped five foreign oil workers in early June. It freed them more than 36 hours later but threatened further attacks on the oil industry.

Nigeria is Africa's largest crude oil producer, providing around 2.6 millions barrels a day, and is the world's six largest crude exporter.

The militants' demand for the withdrawal of foreign oil workers from the region, MEND's recent attacks and the spate of kidnappings have affected the oil industry, from which Nigeria derives 95 percent of its foreign exchange earnings.

The unrest has led to a reduction in Nigeria's crude production by around 20 percent, has caused jitters in the international oil market and triggered an oil price hike.

Nigeria, which currently chairs oil cartel OPEC, hopes to increase its oil production to four million barrels by 2010, taking advantage of the vast oil resources in the Niger Delta, estimated at 30 billion barrels.

The Phlippine embassy

The Philippine Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria, meanwhile is looking into the reports of the two Filipinos' abduction.

"The embassy is aware of the news reports and is trying to confirm it with the authorities," Gilberto Asuque, spokesperson of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), said in a phone interview.

Wire reports quoted Rivers State Police Commissioner Samuel Agbetuyi as saying that two Filipinos had been kidnapped in the Niger Delta.

The Filipinos were not identified. It was not also clear who was behind the abduction.

Reports said the incident was the latest in the string of kidnappings and assaults on foreign workers in the Niger Delta, where militants fighting for control of the region's resources have warned oil workers to leave.

Last February, Filipino worker, Anthony Santos, was among the group of foreigners who were kidnapped by militant youths from the MEND.

Santos, 33, was released after 11 days and returned to Manila March 4.

Santos said he was treated well by his kidnappers, one of whom was a young man who he was also able to help before the kidnapping took place. *AFP with a report from Nikko Dizon*

Auditor says he had doubts on PNP deal

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE RESIDENT AUDITOR OF THE PHILIPPINE National Police had raised reservations about the modes of procurement preferred by the police in acquiring some P322 million worth of cars, motorcycles and handguns.

"We were asked and we raised reservations," said Jaime Serrano, the Commission on Audit's resident auditor for PNP. "(We said) we go for public bidding because of its inherent benefits. They considered the reservations and said it (mode of procurement) was all in accordance with RA 9184, and that it would be most advantageous to government."

The police are acquiring some 203 patrol cars worth P162 million, 12 units of 600-cc motorcycles worth P9.6 million and 5,000 firearms worth P151 million through "negotiated procurement" and "direct contracting."

The police, in fact, saved roughly P56 million from these purchases, senior PNP officials said.

RA 9184 or the law on government procurement provides for exceptions to public bidding and lays down conditions that must exist before these options are employed.

Serrano said the COA also observed one negotiation, adding it was the police's way of ensuring transparency.

(The police has at times invited businessmen to observe biddings, part of the campaign to stamp out corruption in government, he pointed out.)

A recurring point raised during the deliberations for the recent purchases was if the justifications cited by the police were enough, he said.

There was a "brainstorming" on the subject and the legalities were discussed, he said.

During the interview, he cited a handbook on RA 984 that explains the law's reasons why it prefers public bidding:

"In a case, the court held that by its very nature and characteristic, a competitive public bidding aims to protect the public interest by giving the public the best possible advantages through open competition.

Another self-evident purpose of public bidding is to avoid or preclude suspicion of favoritism and anomalies in the execution of public contracts. Also it aims to obtain the best possible deal fostering transparency and preventing favoritism, collusion and fraud in the award of contracts."

The police had defended their actions by saying they were anchored in the law, and the transactions were all above ground.

"There have been safeguards that there is no corruption involved in this transaction. It was ensured that government benefited by this action of the PNP," police spokesperson Sr. Supt. Samuel Pagdilao had said.

The COA in Camp Crame submits post-audit reports to the Office of the President and Congress, and in case of any irregularity, to the Ombudsman.

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OPINION

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Lost

EDITORIAL

ONLY THREE DAYS AFTER DECLARING "ALL-OUT war" against communist rebels, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a similar "all-out war" against graft and corruption. To each of these wars, she committed similar amounts of P1 billion in additional funds. But both seem similarly doomed to fail. The first because 37 years of fighting the communist insurgency has proved the war cannot be won by force or by force of will; and the second, because of sheer lack of will.

The additional P1 billion that the Arroyo administration set aside to combat corruption represents the government's counterpart fund to a $21-million grant from the United States under the Millennium Challenge Account. The latter amount has been divided up among the Office of the Ombudsman, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Bureau of Customs and the Department of Finance to beef up their respective anti-corruption campaigns, like the well publicized "lifestyle checks" and the "Run After Smugglers" and "Run After Tax Evaders" programs. Thus, these agencies will have an extra P2 billion in their war chests to combat corruption.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that by committing more funds into the anti-corruption campaign, the Arroyo administration was sending a strong signal to the international community that it was serious about addressing the problem. Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez said this showed the President's "firm resolve to fight graft and corruption." Even opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson sees something positive resulting from this infusion of funds, saying the money could be "put to good use because the US government will be monitoring" how the money will be spent.

It all depends really on how one defines "good use." In the months ahead, the public is likely to see more officials from the most graft-ridden agencies being exposed for flunking the "lifestyle checks" and more celebrities being haled to court for tax evasion. One or two might get sentenced to serve long prison terms by the Sandiganbayan. The Office of the Ombudsman might finally get to hire more lawyers and investigators as it has been asking all these years. But not even all these will be enough to convince a cynical public that the government is serious about stamping out graft and corruption.

And what will convince Filipinos that an "all-out war" is finally being waged against corruption? Catching the crooks who are widely perceived to be powerful and close to the President, and putting them behind bars. Nothing less.

Anyone who is half-aware of what's going on in government can rattle off the names of his favorite suspects, but surely high on any such list would be former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante and scores of congressmen who took part in the P728-million fertilizer scam. Then there are the top election officials who approved the now voided P1.3-billion contract with Mega Pacific to supply vote-counting machines. The problem is, the very officials whose sworn duty it is to investigate these cases don't want to touch them.

Four months ago, a deputy ombudsman announced that a 10-member task force had been organized to look into the fertilizer scam, upon the prodding of the Senate which was conducting its own investigation. The official boasted that the task force would keep following the trail of corruption even if it led to Malacañang's doorsteps. Perhaps, the trail brought the investigators to the Pasig River where they must have drowned, since that was the last thing the public heard from them.

In the meantime, Gutierrez has been fighting an old order from the Supreme Court to get cracking on the poll automation case. Instead of filing charges against everyone involved in the fraudulent transaction, Gutierrez has been questioning the Court's authority to issue such an order.

Thus, we have the agency charged with investigating and prosecuting graft cases showing extreme reluctance to do its duty in defiance of a court order and the recommendation of the Senate. By her inaction on these cases, Gutierrez has virtually confirmed suspicions that she was put in the position to protect persons close to the President.

Given how Gutierrez seems to be single-mindedly pursuing that mission, not even throwing billions into the campaign will ensure that the war against corruption will be won. The new war is lost before it begins.

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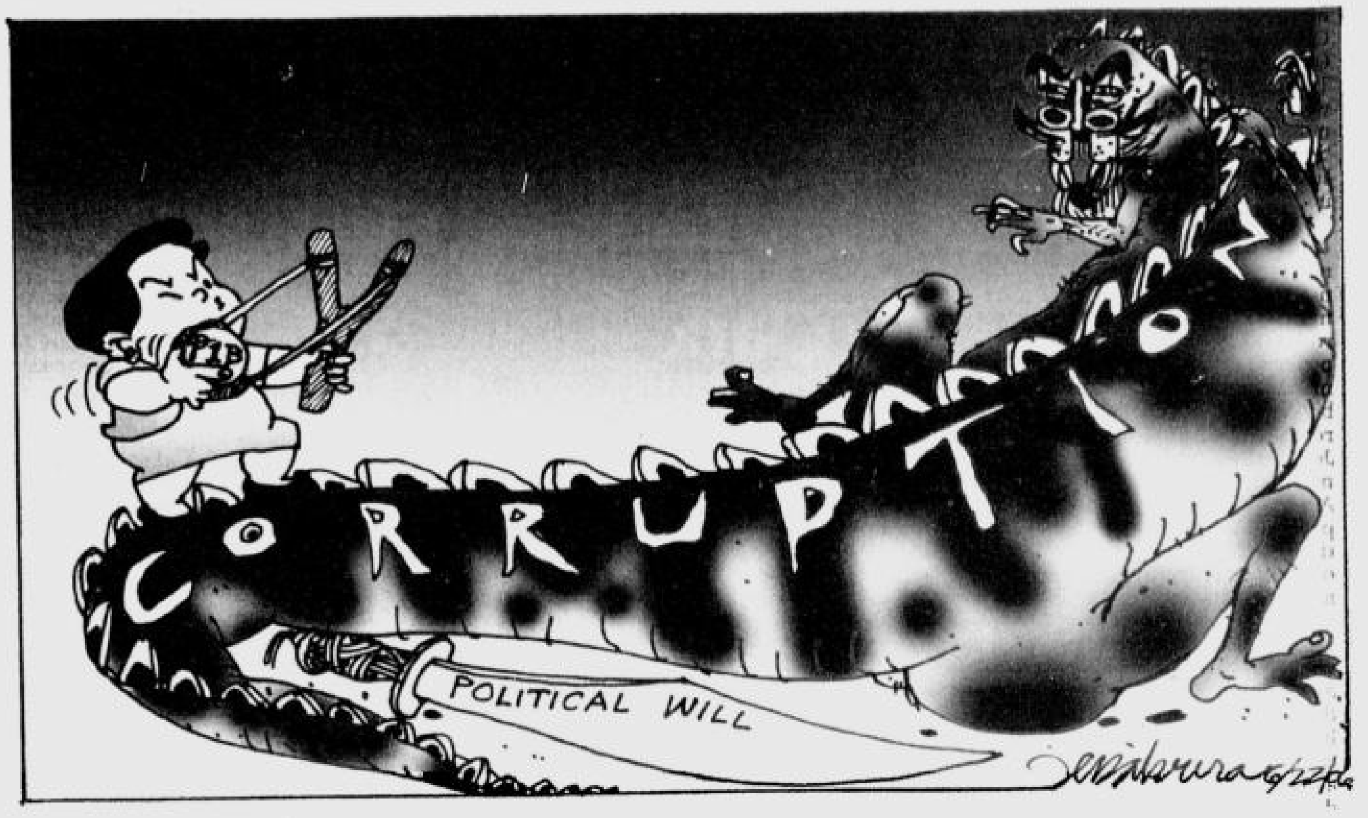

No laughing matter

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

YOU BACK INTO A TIME-TUNNEL WHEN YOU read news dispatches from Burma these days. A British Broadcasting Corporation report on how three Burmese comedians poke fun at life, under the country's brutal military regime, transports one back to furtive wisecracks against the Marcos dictatorship.

In Mandalay, the Moustache Brothers perform Burmese vaudeville: a mixture of song, dance and slapstick humor, BBC's Kate McGeown reports. "But interspersed among their routines" are jokes about life in the most Orwellian of Southeast Asian countries.

Cracking a joke against Big Brother is a "tiny revolution," George Orwell once wrote. And the Moustache Brothers' "show is so popular ... because it is a rarity, " BBC adds. "Hardly anyone else dares to openly criticize government, which is not surprising given the likely consequences—long prison sentences, hard labor or worse."

Two men, it's said, were exchanging hand signals furtively at a Rangoon bar and chuckling. "They're deaf mutes," the police explained. "And they're telling political jokes."

"We have little to lose," the Moustache Brothers shrug. The two have served long jail terms. They're banned from public venues and reduced to performing at home. "We're on the government blacklist," said Lu Maw. "There is nothing more the authorities can do to us."

"Jokes involve some kind of unmasking," write Oxford's Steven Lukes and Hebrew University's Itzhak Galnoor in their book: "No Laughing Matter." The "circulation of jokes in a repressive society is a form of coping."

Jokes that unmasked the Marcos dictatorship circulated by word-of-mouth or on mimeographed sheets. Photocopiers were pressed into service later. Like Burma, the Marcos regime punished the irreverent wisecrack: a blow to the solar plexus, detention and, in some instances, "salvaging."

Remember the omnipresent picture of Marcos? "Is that your boss?" asked the visitor. "No," the lady at the desk replied. "That's the cashier."

But dictators are humorless. Gen. Than Shwe cannot even tolerate detained Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's name being mentioned in his presence. Told by Willy Brandt that he collected jokes people cracked at his expense, East German dictator Walter Ubricht snapped: "I collect people who tell jokes about me."

The Moustache Brothers and soul mates have a lot to unmask. Suu Kyi has been detained, by the generals, for 10 years and 230 days now. Her crime? She led her National Democratic League in winning 382 out of 485 constituencies in the 1990 elections.

And last May 27, her detention was arbitrarily stretched, by the junta, for a year. That'd mean a total of 11 years and 213 days—simply because she won elections and continues to hold the affection of the Burmese people.

Burmese "elections," under the generals, have been simplified, the joke goes. A voter in favor of the junta can write: "yes." Or he may say: "I resign."

"There is little open defiance" today, BBC reports. But many people do what little they can to register their opposition.

This includes shying away "from anything the regime could use as propaganda, like the opening of a new pagoda." In a country where the local media are heavily censored, people listen to foreign broadcasts "to find out what [is] really happening in Burma." In the same way, Filipinos tuned in to BBC, Voice of America and Radio Veritas to bypass Marcos' censored stations.

Most villagers "were simply too scared," BBC reports. "We're waiting and hoping for change, but what can we do? Look at what the government has done to the Lady [Aung San Suu Kyi]. If they can do that to her, think what they would do to us."

Fear is the main tool of the Burmese generals. The Association of East Asian Nations had naively hoped that membership would moderate, even change, the dictatorship. Continued repression by the junta has instead weakened and embarrassed Asean.

"Suu Kyi is often seen as (Asia's) equivalent of (Nelson) Mandela," journalist Harvey Stockwin said in "Reflections From Asia," his Hong Kong-based program. "Both are dedicated democrats, yearning to expand freedom for their (peoples)." Both were imprisoned by harsh authoritarian regimes.

Ultimately, South African President FW De Klerk saw that releasing Mandela and sharing power with the African National Congress were essential for the nation's survival and prosperity. There's no such sign from the Burmese junta.

A Burmese general did try, Stockwin reveals, to "negotiate" with Suu Kyi the predictable conditions for her possible release: no traveling outside Rangoon without prior permission, limited public rallies, no public speaking, etc.

"Aung San Suu Kyi's response would have been: no deal. She would have immediately rejected any thought of continuing, in effect, to be detained while being ostensibly free." Unlike the waffling Asean governments, parliamentarians have been increasingly vocal at this repression. "Filipino and Thai media commentators have been quick to suggest that since (Burma) pays no attention to Asean's pleas, it should be expelled from the organization." Stockwin notes. Burma's repression is slowly becoming an international issue.

After more than four decades of military rule, there's still no end in sight. "Waiting is something the Burmese are getting very good at," BBC notes. "But despite everything, they have still not given up."

"One day I'm going to perform properly again," said Moustache Brother Lu Maw. "Maybe this street will become like Broadway or West End," he joked, looking at the dusty alley he lives in. And that's no laughing matter.

* * *

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Mirrors

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I READ AMALIA CULLARIN ROSALES' ESSAY on Jose Rizal last Monday, June 19, the national hero's 145th birthday, and found the part where she talks about the reaction of her students to reading Rizal for the first time fascinating. Among them:

"The course opened my eyes to the greatness of Filipinos."

"This course is for all time. Rizal's writings are comparable to the Bible."

"I discovered the defects of our people during Rizal's time—the same defects are still in existence until now."

"The messages of Rizal are still very relevant today—for the youth to love their country and defend it and their rights as a people against any foreigner."

You get the drift.

It would help though to think of Rizal's writings not as gospel truth but as great literature—which the Bible also is. The teaching of Rizal has also suffered in the past from his works being turned into sacred text. In fact, it is full of wit and humor, Rizal being past master at satire. Some of his essays are utterly droll, as when he apologizes for the lowly Filipinos taking a bath every day as opposed to the aristocratic Spanish who regaled the world only with perfumed bodies.

As to our defending our rights against any foreigner, substitute the word "tyrant" for "foreigner," and I'm with you wholeheartedly. Rizal wasn't just a bitter critic of foreign rule, he was a bitter critic of tyranny in whatever way it showed itself. He excoriated the bad side of the *indio* as much as that of his ruler, and demanded that he live with pride and dignity. He would not have stood for a local tyranny any more than a foreign one.

But I do appreciate the things Rosales' students have said for one reason. I too felt that way reading Philippine history for the first time—in my case that was the product of becoming an activist more than attending class—and Rizal's works in particular. The "Noli" and "Fili" truly were eye-openers, turning Rizal from statue to flesh-and-blood, a singular Filipino who struggled to understand and articulate the vicissitudes of his time. Indeed, turning the past into a beacon for us who were floundering in the stormy seas of history to follow.

Rosales herself says Rizal's characters continue to live among us. We still have Señor Pasta, who seeks only personal advancement; we still have Capitan Tiago, who is subservient to higher-ups; we still have Kabesang Tales, who is driven to rebellion by hardship and oppression; we still have Doña Victorina, who takes on the airs of the masters with buffoonish results. If I remember right, Doña Victorina, believed that the "de" after a surname guaranteed aristocracy, so she had not just one but two "de's" after her name: Doña Victorina de de Espadaña. Rizal was funny, even if he was also deadly serious.

Well, Rizal did say one very important thing—which is twin brother to Santayana's famous aphorism—that people who do not read their history are condemned to repeat it. Rizal said those who do not see where they came from will never get to where they are going. That has become a very prophetic warning for us.

If Rizal's characters continue to live today, it is because we have failed to read history, or indeed read him. Our world today is not unlike the one he lived in, the superficial differences in technology aside. Rizal's world was one where lies and hypocrisy held sway, upheld viciously by the liberal application of the sword. It was a world where spiritual and physical growth was stunted by a culture that militated against it. It was a world where the *indios* were reduced to despair and indifference, the intelligentsia opting to live abroad if not acquiescing to the tyranny at home. So it was then, so it is now.

Rizal's writings truly have much to say to our own time. But more than his writings, his life itself has much to say to our time, and that is probably the greatest legacy he bequeathed to us. The guy was monumentally brilliant, a Renaissance man through and through. He was a poet, a novelist, a painter, a sculptor, an ophthalmologist, a botanist, and God knows what else. He even excelled in fencing and pistol shooting. He lived in many places in Europe and knew several Western languages, including a bit of English. By rights, he could have joined the ranks of the elite, the social circles in which they moved not being closed to him, notwithstanding that he came from modest origins.

Instead, he chose not to be oblivious to the plight of his land and people and brought it to light in novel and polemic and whatever else he did. Instead, he chose to come home despite having a reasonably good life as an exile abroad and despite the entreaties of his friends not to, because the Spanish authorities could not abide truth and criticism, which were often one and the same. Instead, he chose to rebel against the injustice and folly of his time—however he remained two minds till the end about the wisdom of an armed uprising—trying to push back the limits of the possible with all the genius and generosity he could muster, embracing the fate that went along with it with grace and fortitude.

More than anything he wrote, it was what Rizal did that has much to teach us. His life was his greatest work, a story continues to unfold to this day but whose meaning continues to elude us. I can understand the blasts of illumination and bursts of admiration Rosales' students have experienced and strain to express. I've felt them too, not the least at the realization we, too, have a man for all seasons, a Filipino we can be proud of and want to emulate.

Read history. You will find, as the most thrilling and frightening sensation of all, that you are not looking at the yellowed pages of a book, you are looking at a mirror.

Mayors' league on track re unicameral

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

READER RICHARD LOZADA RECENTLY WROTE to this paper questioning certain assertions made by this column. He asked how a concurrent resolution of both chambers of Congress to convene a constituent assembly could legalize charter amendments when in fact, as some senators have noted, the 1987 Constitution does not specifically mention this method. Sec. 1 Article XVII limits Congress to two methods of amending the Charter. One is by a vote of three-fourths of all its members. The second is by a constitutional convention which it may call by a two-thirds vote of all its members, or by a majority vote of its members, "submit to the electorate the question of calling such a convention." A third method, the people's initiative, is outside the realm of Congress.

* * *

But just because a constituent assembly is not specified in the Charter does not mean it's not recognized. Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman sent me, from his extensive library, pertinent records of the 1986 Constitutional Commission proceedings which clearly show that the commissioners recognized the constituent assembly as a mode of amending the Charter. Most relevant were the comments of Commissioner Jose Suarez who repeatedly referred to this mechanism. In fact, at one point Commissioner Adolf Azcuna asked Suarez if the power to propose amendments or revisions to the Constitution is a "legislative power" or "a different kind of power called a constituent power." Suarez answered, "I'd say it's a constituent power."

* * *

The reader also asked how the country could save some money with the abolition of the Senate and by shifting to a unicameral parliament bigger than the current Congress. This is readily apparent. In a unicameral body, there will only be one set of committee hearings. In the current set-up, there are always two sets of hearings. There's an expensive duplication of the bureaucracy, whereas a single-chamber parliament would be streamlined and made much leaner, and legislative work would be faster and more efficient. Under our present system, it costs over P700 million to pass a bill. No, we don't need two chambers and the mayors' league is right in campaigning for a unicameral system.

* * *

Cecile Alvarez and I recently had as guest in our Sunday evening dzRH program Virgilio "Ver" Peña, former head of IBM Philippines and until recently chair of the government's Commission on Information and Communication Technology (CICT). Peña gave us a bird's eye view of the huge worldwide business process outsourcing (BPO) industry. Its main pillar is the call center business, but it also includes medical transcription, inventory-taking, credit-checking, insurance claims processing and even tutoring. He said BPO worldwide generates $300 billion to $400 billion a year, of which our fledgling industry, outpaced by early birds like India, takes just a small slice. But our call center industry is very promising. It now employs about 120,000 people, and this number is expected to increase by 800,000 at the end of the decade and earn as much as $12.8 billion. All the major call center outfits are already here and have set up offices in many cities.

* * *

Peña noted that employment in the BPO industry has its own stresses and tensions, like any other occupation. One is the skewed lifestyle of many agents who work at night, when America is awake. But for the moment, it looks like all systems go for RP—if we play our cards well.

There are two main requirements for the call center industry to move forward: We must strengthen our capability in English, and especially improve our use of idiomatic expressions, and we must upgrade computer training. Peña advises young kids who want to work as call center agents (at starting salaries of P12,000 to P15,000 a month) to listen to English-language programs on TV and radio. It is the same advice given to Chinese taxi drivers two years before the Beijing Olympics: Learn English.

* * *

Last Tuesday, I wrote about the multi-awarded technical/vocational Punlaan School at 173 M. Paterno St. in San Juan that seeks to uplift the welfare of household help by training them professionally to deliver services in the homes. Starting July 5, Punlaan will offer a once-a-week course from 1 to 5 p.m. in local and international cooking, table setting and service, housekeeping, basic conversational English, basic sewing and values education, for only P1,000 a month. The training course can be viewed as a reward and incentive to house help, but obviously what they learn will also benefit the families they serve. Unfortunately, I stated the wrong phone numbers for Punlaan. The correct numbers are 727-0581 to 82, local 15, or e-mail: punlaan@mozcom.com. Ask for Lolit Parcasio.

* * *

Every Saturday morning, tenants of various condominium buildings in Salcedo Village, Makati, descend on the Jaime Velasquez Park along Leviste and Tordesillas streets to buy foodstuff for the weekend from the Salcedo Community Market. They buy seafoods, fish, all kinds of hams and specialty food items, but most especially viands such as *paella*, *callos*, *bacalao*, *lumpiang ubod*, all kinds of *kakanin* and delicacies. These are cooked by homeowners from the Makati villages, who are now being transformed from "plain housewives" to entrepreneurs. In addition, plants, artworks by well-known and moderately known painters and many crafts are also on sale there. The Salcedo market, reminiscent of the flea markets in Europe, the United States and Australia, was organized two years ago by Lisa Periquet, Trickie Colayco Lopa and the Bel-Air Juniors, and managed by the indefatigable Bel-Air barangay captain, Nene Lichauco. It's worth a visit every Saturday, if only to free oneself from having to cook meals for the family on weekends.

A college for indigenous peoples

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

I WROTE IN THE FUTURE TENSE THEN, I WRITE in the present tense now. I had some doubts then, I don't have those doubts now.

Late last year I wrote about Pamulaan, a special tertiary school or college for indigenous peoples (IPs) that was being built in Mindanao. The target date for its opening was the opening of classes this June.

The dream has come true. Pamulaan recently opened with 47 IP students (from 19 tribes from all over the Philippines) enrolled in the college program.

Pamulaan means seedbed. The college aims to strengthen the potentials of indigenous youth for community leadership. It is a college education program for the IPs in the Philippines and a response to the IPs' dream of an educational program that is rooted in their life, culture and aspirations as a people.

Pamulaan is under the president of the University of South Eastern Philippines. The site is in USEP's Mintal campus in Davao City. IPs from North America recently came to visit and were surprised to find something so special and so focused.

Pamulaan is the first of its kind in the country, says founder and co-director Benjamin Abadiano, who also dreamed and founded the successful Tugdaan Training Center for the Mangyans in Occidental Mindoro. The center is now ably run by the Mangyans themselves with the help of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (SSpS).

Unlike Tugdaan (which also means seedbed), which is for high school and livelihood training, Pamulaan offers degree programs such as BA in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development, BS in Indigenous Peoples Education, BA in Peace Building and Multi-Cultural Studies, BS in Indigenous Agriculture. Pamulaan also offers ladderized and modular courses leading to an associate degree as well as to short-term courses for community leaders and development workers.

Abadiano, 43, is one of the main driving forces behind the endeavor. A 2004 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Emergent Leadership, he was recently elected president of Assisi Development Foundation, of which he used to be executive coordinator. He took the place of Ambassador Howard Dee (his mentor and model) who is now Assisi's chair. Assisi recently turned 30.

A dreamer and doer, Abadiano pulled out all the stops to make the IPs' dream come true. He was not disappointed. Help came quietly, like spring water flowing over seeds waiting to burst into life. Pamulaan was among the grantees of the recent World Bank-sponsored Panibagong Paraan funding campaign.

Pamulaan is the fruit of the partnership of various government and nongovernment agencies such as the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples, Assisi Development Foundation, Cartwheel Foundation, the Office of Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., and Ilawan Center for Volunteer and Leadership, which Abadiano also founded.

Pamulaan aims "to create culturally appropriate and relevant pathways of professional training and formation for indigenous youth and leaders."

Assisi Foundation and other foundations have pledged scholarship funds. This means full tuition, miscellaneous fees, dorm stay and full board and lodging and travel expenses to project and practicum sites.

Important features of Pamulaan are the heritage house and library that showcase the richness of indigenous culture. The dorm within the campus gives IP students the chance to live together, exchange experiences and go through value formation programs.

Pamulaan is not just for the IPs of Mindanao. It is open to IPs from Luzon and the Visayas and to non-IPs working for IPs.

Pamulaan is indeed a great dream whose time has come.

But why is Pamulaan attached to USEP, a government institution? Abadiano says making government one of Pamulaan's stakeholders give Pamulaan a better chance of sustainability. Pamulaan "is not a fund-driven" project, Abadiano says. There was no funding in the beginning, but the moment the project was made known, funds just poured in. Of course, part of Abadiano's RM Award prize money (more than a million pesos) was earmarked for this project.

Abadiano is one of a kind, a rare find indeed. Deeply spiritual, this Jesuit-educated development worker is ever on the go. The IPs are the love of his life. It is among them that he experienced epiphany and enlightenment.

There are around 12 million IPs in the Philippines. They could be classified into 120 ethnic groups. Most of them have little or no access to "a culturally sensitive, appropriate and relevant education." It is their right, both God-given and by law, to receive basic services, including higher education.

The IPs' rights are enshrined in the 1987 Constitution. In 1997, Congress passed the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (Ipra) which strengthened their right to be duly recognized and protected.

But some things are easier said than done. Many IPs continue to find difficulty in relating personally, culturally and academically with mainstream realities. It is hoped that education, such as is offered by Pamulaan, would put the IPs in step with the mainstream while being affirmed as proudly IP or PIP.

Pamulaan hopes to see the IPs proudly "owning" the education program that drew from the life-giving wilderness and communities whence they arose.

So while our national leaders continue to engage in verbal and political acrobatics, and while many of us are suffering from political diarrhea and dementia, there are special Filipinos who continue to dream dreams and do their own part as if there indeed is hope for this benighted nation.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

One voice for hope

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

TODAY, IN THREE MAJOR NEWSPAPERS, INcluding this one, is a full-page manifesto prepared by a group calling itself One Voice. I'm proud to be a member of that group. One Voice is not an association of groups. It represents the coming together of individuals who have agreed to set aside their partisan positions in order to achieve something sorely lacking in our country today: a consensus.

Whether or not you agree with the partisan positions I have espoused since June of last year, I think it is clear to you that I have always called for a consensus which, I admit, is difficult to achieve; for it requires compromise, it demands that we either engage in a zero sum game or toil at finding the things that can unite us rather than those that divide us.

Will the national agenda be set purely according to partisan lines, or is a nonpartisan, or even bipartisan, effort possible?

In the end, the question boils down to your attitude toward change. Do you welcome it, or fear it?

The past year has proven, conclusively to my mind, that while an overwhelming consensus exists for a change, it's the particulars that frighten us. Or putting it another way, there is a huge and widening gulf between those who are politically engaged and the citizenry (including the more active or involved in its ranks), whose confidence in the political system's ability to address the genuine needs of the public has diminished—even as its skepticism has greatly increased.

Allow me to propose that the public has been clear in expressing what it expects:

First, that certain political boundaries be respected by everyone. Those boundaries are: (1) any solution to social or political problems should be peaceful, non-military and non-revolutionary—in other words, constitutional; (2) confidence in elections as the supreme expression of the people's will must be asserted—and therefore, elections, to be credible, must be free and fair; more people should be engaged in the effort to identify and achieve solutions to concrete problems.

Second, to be able to say "my loyalty to my party ends where my loyalty to my country begins," not in the sense of nimbly abandoning one party for another out of ambition or convenience, but rather to show that partisan affiliation should never get in the way of working together for a better life. Divisions over principle are not only unavoidable, but necessary; but there is always a point where differences in principle serve to prevent, rather than foster, change.

As for now, on the existing political landscape, all that is presented by the administration and its critics is a choice between absolute victory or total defeat. But this is not really a choice: it is a death sentence. Some of you, gentle readers, agree with me that the President has fatally divided the nation, and that her efforts—in combination with those of her allies—are leading the country not forward, but backward toward a less-democratic system shaped according to a dangerously tyrannical frame of mind.

Others will counter that she is bold and brave, and has the true grit to move the country forward; still others maintain that they'd rather be left alone.

Is there any hope that the fighting will stop, or at least held at bay so that the country can move forward, instead of being stuck in a rut? Yes there is, and it begins with the process of identifying what can serve as the means to foster unity and most of all, cooperation. With me, the process began with the recognition that the issues are now larger than the President's suitability for office. Her lack of popularity and even credibility are no longer the point; neither is her moral fitness for office. The fact is, a process has been unleashed larger than her. A process that, if allowed to continue, will go on eroding public confidence in—and the credibility of—our democratic way of life.

One Voice has five proposals. The first is, to discontinue the present "people's initiative"; the second, to arrive at a social reform program now; the third is, to ensure that the elections in 2007 are held as scheduled, and to agree that if freely and fairly held, they will serve as an indisputable, indirect referendum on the administration (for this to happen, we need electoral reform now); the fourth, to hold a constitutional convention (not a "con-ass") after the 2007 elections, assuming a public clamor for it continues; and the fifth, regardless of one's partisan affiliations, to push for a collective effort to rebuild the trustworthiness of our democratic institutions.

These five proposals have been arrived at by the various people in One Voice, taking into account the harsh, present-day realities from different, but sincere, perspectives. The only requisite was to abandon both the "winner-take-all" or "win-win" (the latter sacrifices principle for political accommodation) mentalities that are unproductive. Cosmetic change won't do; neither can we be stampeded into abandoning critical thinking and an uncompromising demand for intellectual honesty.

The full-page statement puts forward not only the five-point agenda of One Voice, but the reasons behind the decision to propose the agenda. Please take the time, too, to read the entire position paper of One Voice, which you can download at www.onevoice.org.ph, or ask for by calling 02-376-3421. If you find that our position paper makes sense, please add your voice: sign up and take part in the effort to build a productive consensus.

Force for change

YOUNG BLOOD

Elliotte Jay M. Lagado

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

EMJAY, MY GIRLFRIEND, LEFT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE Philippines-Los Baños on March 31, 2006 to study at the Philippine Military Academy. Since then, I've made it a habit to read the papers daily. I live in a dilapidated apartment that has no TV set or running water (my housemate and I spend our money on "more basic" needs), and I thought reading the papers would help me go to sleep and get my mind off the thought of my girlfriend's departure.

The effect, however, has been different. The more I read the news, the more I realize how uninformed I am and the more hours I spend pondering how our country got to the mess that it is in. I find myself asking questions such as: Is the Armed Forces of the Philippines under the heel of tyrannical rule by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that it won't bow to the incessant public clamor for it to divulge the Mayuga Report? Is GMA a closet dictator who tipped her hand by issuing Proclamation 1017 and EO 464? How base and how low can some of our leaders sink that they now resort to chicanery to attain their selfish goal of amending the Constitution? Why do we have corrupt civilian and military officials who cook up one scam after another? And why are "thinking Filipinos" abjectly taking all this instead of taking action?

I have often lost sleep trying to find the answers to these questions. With my patriotic and nationalistic blood rejuvenated (thanks to F. Sionil Jose), I crave for insightful ideas that would shed light on my queries.

One night, I saw a thick, hardbound book collecting dust on top of my housemate's drawer. I recognized it right away. I had borrowed it from a fraternity brother who bought it for P150 in a garage sale. The book, "Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry," was published in 1871 and written by a prominent Freemason, a philosopher and lawyer named Albert Pike.

The sheer size of the book—861 yellowing pages—made it look forbidding. And not only was it heavy, it was also full of recondite writings and illustrations elaborating on the first 32 degrees of Freemasonry. But having read books on similar themes, I went ahead and read it. I knew that almost every library in America had a copy, so I felt confident I was not reading some secret writings. One only has to Google the first three words of the book's title to get an idea of what it is all about. Besides, I could not resist reading Pike's political and moral theories on democracy.

"So public opinion is an immense force; and its currents are as inconstant and incomprehensible as those of the atmosphere," Pike wrote. "The business of the statesman is to find the means to shape, control and direct it. According as that is done, it is beneficial and constructive, or destructive and ruinous." He also said that the blind Force of the people must be regulated by Intellect.

Recently, GMA and her cohorts have been trying to jump-start Charter change by using the force of the Illiterate, the blind Force. GMA knows that to succeed, she has to regulate the blind Force by chicanery, misinformation and bribery. Cha-cha, despite the supposedly noble intentions behind it, is no different from PP 1017 and EO 464 in that its ultimate purpose is to divert public attention from the "Hello, Garci" tapes and the massive vote-rigging in the 2004 elections. It is but one of those things conceived by the administration so it can maintain its hold on power. Intellect? Yes! But this is Intellect tainted with avarice and knavery, the kind that Hitler, Marcos and kindred souls possessed. Conservative or ruinous? Let's watch the news tonight.

With regard to false and slavish political theories, Pike urged his readers to "adopt the theory that offices and employment are to be given as rewards for services rendered to the party, and they soon become the prey and spoil of faction, the booty of the victory of faction; and leprosy is in the body of the State. The body of the Commonwealth becomes a mass of corruption, like a living carcass rotten with syphilis."

True enough, this has been the tradition in our country where *pakikisama* thrives in many offices of the government. Every day, millions of Filipinos suffer the ravages of poverty while high-ranking military and government officials plunder our already debt-ridden treasury. All this because even the basest and most unqualified are given top government positions on account of power, popularity, familial ties and *pakikisama*.

While our country sinks into the abyss, the unpopular but able and honest statesman watches in sorrowful resignation.

The military or the Mace of Force, as Pike calls it, should be the bastion of manliness, uprightness, integrity and chivalry. Plato theorized that once the military is corrupted, the Republic is doomed. We need not scan the dusty pages of ancient history to validate Plato's theory. It was the military that held up the Marcos dictatorship, and blinded by power and wealth, the military was totally controlled by the usurper. The long, murderous years of dictatorship would not have been possible without the military on Marcos' side.

Now, we are witnessing signs of the early stages of tyranny. Under GMA, the military is like a foolish warrior. It is subservient to a commander in chief whose credibility is nearly zero.

I suppose that every military man must be in a quandary as to whether to follow duty or morality. May God lead them to the path of righteousness. They should remember that the path that leads to truth is thorny and strewn with seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

I commend Theresa Pangilinan and other militant youths for their bravery and courage. May they serve as a constant reminder that the youth are a Force. What we need right now is a catalyst, a binder and a means to channel our Force to bring about positive changes in our society. Some of us have lost hope in our democracy and have left our native land in search of greener pastures. Some have even joined the ranks of the Left. But those like me who are believers in Equality, Liberty and Fraternity should make our forebears proud by showing fidelity to our ideals. For as Albert Pike put it, democracy is an abominable system but all others are worse.

Depressing and piteous though the situation in our country may be, I believe that there are still people who believe that change will come any time soon. As Oscar Wilde put it, "We are all in the gutter but some of us are looking at the stars."

Elliotte Jay M. Lagado, 22, is a BS Chemical Engineering student at the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Away with redundant tax incentives

THE INQUIRER'S SPECIAL REPORT ON the state of education in the Philippines (PDI, 6/4/06) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue's failure to meet its collection targets reminded me of my recent study on fiscal incentives and investments in the Philippines.

Fiscal incentives refer to the system of income tax holidays and tax and import duty exemptions provided by the government's investment promotion agencies (IPAs)—Board of Investment (BOI) and special economic zones and freeports—as an inducement for investment.

In my study, I discovered the following:

1. Most incentives are redundant—meaning, investments would have been made anyway even if they had not been provided. This is because the "privileged" firms expected to earn above-average profits at the time of registration.

2. Only one industry (primarily efficiency-seeking exporters) is actually sensitive to incentives. Therefore, most incentives are purely fiscal cost to the economy (i.e., the IPAs are simply, indiscriminately giving potential tax revenues away).

The sheer size and number of tax exemptions have obvious implications on the national budget—the government cannot spend money it does not have. Because a large component of the national budget every year is devoted to expenditures for raising incomes and reducing poverty and inequality (such as expenditures for roads, textbooks, public hospitals, agrarian reform, etc.—the corruption notwithstanding), the system of tax exemptions effectively preserves and reinforces inequality.

I have been following the grant by the BOI of income tax holidays to both Globe and Smart for their 3G investments. This incentive is clearly redundant. Smart committed to its 3G investments without incentives. However, the BOI granted an incentive to Globe for exactly the same type of investment. Smart then complained that it too deserved the same incentive. Caught in a bind, the BOI accommodated Smart.

This is a classic case of redundancy which shows how damaging an IPA can be to the economy. Because they are such intense competitors, Globe and Smart would have invested anyway even without the incentive. The behavior of the IPAs in this country is appalling as it has been for years.

The recent moves by the Department of Trade and Industry to abolish income tax holidays are a step in the right direction. Much, much more should be done. If the BIR is wondering why it is falling short of its targets, and if the Department of Education is lamenting its lack of resources, they shouldn't look too far. Too many investments are now tax-exempt in some way or form.

—RENATO E. RESIDE JR., Ph.D.,
assistant professor,
University of the Philippines
School of Economics,
Diliman, Quezon City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Estafa case suspect not an AFP consultant

WE WOULD LIKE TO SET THE RECORD straight on the news report "AFP consultant arrested for estafa" (PDI, 5/23/06) of Margaux Ortiz. She mentioned in the report that suspect Conrado Nave was a "security and intelligence consultant of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ... employed at the AFP Office of Provost Marshal General" and that "this was confirmed by the 300th Air Intelligence and Security Group of the Philippine Air Force."

Much as we would like to set this issue aside, we categorically deny that Nave has ever been connected with the Office of the Provost Marshal General, AFP (OTPMG). The OTPMG does not hire or avail itself of the services of "consultants." Hence, we can say that Nava's "consultancy"—which was ironically "confirmed" by the 300th AISG, PAF—is another case of usurpation of authority and misrepresentation. The OTPMG will be closely coordinating with the National Bureau of Investigation for the filing of charges against Nave.

We regret Ortiz's inaccurate report. Col. Henry Galarpe, the AFP provost marshal, has always been open to and accommodating with the media. By not confirming the report with the correct source, Ortiz not only wrote an erroneous account; she also unwittingly misled the public in portraying the AFP as an institution that coddles suspected criminals.

—TRISTAN M. KISON,
colonel (GSC) PA,
chief, Public Information Office,
Armed Forces of the Philippines,
Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

The NBI investigator mentioned in my article said (after a couple of confirmations) that the 300th AISG, which worked with the NBI on the case, had affirmed the authenticity of Nave's ID. I only presented the facts as given by the NBI agent-on-case; I never intended to portray the AFP as an institution that coddles suspected criminals.

—MARGAUX ORTIZ,
PDI reporter

Other conference organizers not cited

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO THE NEWS ITEM titled "FVR calls on Europeans to invest more in RP" written by Cynthia Balana. (PDI, 6/16/06)

We would like to inform you that the organizers of the conference were the Ramos Peace and Development Foundation (RPDEV), the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) and the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF)/Germany. Unfortunately, the report failed to cite the last three institutions. Being major partners and sponsors of the event, they deserved to be also mentioned.

The organizers of the conference have decided to publish the speeches and workshop results, as well as other pertinent documents, in a conference report that will be available by August this year.

—PAUL G. SCHÄFER,
resident representative,
Hanns Seidel Foundation,
112 VA Rufino St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Thursday, June 22, 2006

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	V League				Sentro	Worst Case Scenario	S.O.S		Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko		Big News	Dokyu			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Cotta Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	My Girl	Wonderful Life	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season 1)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Beastmaster (Season 1)		Andromeda (Season V)		Fear Factor (Season V)		Ripley's Believe It Or Not		Supernatural (Season 1)		Hex (Season I)	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Codename: Kids Next Door The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy Double Episode	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons - Double Episode		Power Rangers Ninja Storm	PokeMon	Dica	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Ipagdarasal Kita				[illegible]				[illegible] Ng Maynila				Singsing Ni Lola				Tigasin	
Cinemax		Love Walked In (3:10 PM)			Once Upon A Time In Mexico				It Could Happen To You (6:20 PM)			Cat People			Michael Collins (9:45 PM)				
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Global Office	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Crossing Jordan		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Psychic Detectives	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		What Should You Do?		Cold Case		E-Ring	
Discovery Channel		I Survived		Building The Biggest		Before We Ruled The Earth		Walking with Prehistoric Beasts		Extreme Engineering		Mean Machine	Connect	Mythbusters		Building The Biggest		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Tutenstein	Lizzie Mcguire	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN	Motorsport Asia	15th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup			15th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Highlights	15th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup			2006 UPA Pro Tour C'ships		Sportscenter Germany	Germany Tonight	Dubai X Games - Day 3	2006 UPA Pro Tour C'ships		Sportscenter Asia	15th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup		
ETC		American Dreams 3		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Showdog Moms & Dads		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Cenacle Of Divine Mercy	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Virtue Storybook	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	The Sacraments Through The Ages	Special Programming		EWTN Live (Episode With Fr. Mitch Pacwa)		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Seven Sacraments	Images of Mary	Behold the [illegible]	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45 PM)	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Endless Love 1: Autumn In My Heart By Popular Demand		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Captain Barbell	Majika	I Luv NY	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Jewel In The Palace		Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters V		[illegible] (4:05 PM)				Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Doc Martin		Spooks		Riding The Bus With My Sister			Spooks (11:45 PM)
HBO		Peter Pan				All The President's Men				Bridget Jones: The Edge Of Reason				XXX: The Next Level			[illegible] (10:40 PM)		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Shadow Of The Elves	Mission Odyssey	Rune Soldier	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Mission Odyssey
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Global Family Series		ME TV		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics Asia	Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show With David Letterman		Smackdown				JLU	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Everybody Hates Chris	The Late Show With David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	At Home With	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Food 911	Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Good Finds	Martha		Your Private Island	Genuine Article	E! True Hollywood Story	
MTV Philippines		Punk'D		Handpicked [illegible]	MTV Hits (with SMS)					Get Spotted	[illegible]	MTV Hits	Ultrasound Slapshock	TRL		Punk'D		Sessions: Slapshock	Rockola
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Fiesta	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Special		Megastructures		Naked Science: What's Human?		Top 5 - World Cup [illegible]	Top 5 - Amazing Moments	WOW! Sports [illegible]		About Asia		National Geographic Special		Megastructures: [illegible]		Naked Science: Angry Earth	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports [illegible]	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ [illegible] & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay [illegible] With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	[illegible]	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up/ Nick Kicks	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Bakit Bughaw Ang Langit				Bayaw				Pasan Ko Ang Daigdig				It's Cool Bulol				[illegible]
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Scrapped Princess	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Mama		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	The Best Of [illegible]		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Arangkada News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The 4400		Medium		Invasion		Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				[illegible] TV Shopping		Sony Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Kasaganaan		Friends Again		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports							World Tennis Masters [illegible]		GWS 24-2006	Live Match '06			Gymnastics FIG World Cup				Solar Sports Desk	World Tennis Masters [illegible]	
Sports Plus				FIFA World Cup Portugal vs Mexico						World's Greatest Auto Shows		Auto Focus		World Game		FIFA World Cup Ghana vs USA			
Star Movies	The Legend Of Johnny Lingo			Honey, I Blew Up The Kid			My Favorite Martian			America's Sweethearts				Love Actually				[illegible]	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	The Simple Life: [illegible]		Scrubs	Arrested Development	The Drew Carey Show	Less Than Perfect	Seinfeld	The Simple Life [illegible]
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Videos		Joey (8:50 PM)	Ghost Whisperer (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

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Cagayan flood control plan gets ₱100M

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the release of an initial P100 million as part of the P128-billion, 30-year flood control project for Cagayan Valley, officials here said on Wednesday.

Bishop Ramon Villena, chair of the regional development council (RDC) in Cagayan Valley, said the fund release "only proves that the President means very well" when it comes to her administration's development thrusts for Northern Luzon.

The amount, RDC officials said, would be spent for the construction of about 10 small water-impounding projects (SWIP) that would be distributed in Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela, Cagayan and Batanes.

Ms Arroyo announced the fund release during Friday's joint Cabinet and RDC meeting in Cauayan City that she presided.

Villena lauded Ms Arroyo's move to hold Cabinet meetings with the country's RDCs as the government lined up its plan to group the country into four "mega-regions" and boost economic growth.

"This is very admirable because she is bringing the government closer to the people, bringing development to the countryside, and not always imperial Manila," he said.

In that meeting, Ms Arroyo pledged some P75 billion in development projects to be poured in the next three years into North Luzon—composed of the Ilocos, Cagayan Valley and Cordillera regions, and Aurora and Nueva Ecija provinces.

Mila Rimando, regional director of the National Economic and Development Authority, said the three-year master plan for North Luzon includes improving roads and upgrading of airports and seaports.

A major road-widening project, she said, involves the Narvacan-Tuguegarao City Road, which intends to improve access from Ilocos Sur to Cagayan, passing through Abra and Kalinga.

She said another major highway would be built to link La Union, Benguet, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino, passing through Bauang town in La Union, Baguio City, Kayapa and Dupax del Sur towns in Nueva Vizcaya, and Nagtipunan town in Quirino.

The development plan includes the upgrading of four airports in Cagayan Valley: Tuguegarao City in Cagayan, Basco in Batanes, Cauayan City in Isabela and Bagabag in Nueva Vizcaya.

Rimando said seaports in Aparri and Santa Ana in Cagayan, Basco, and Palanan in Isabela would also be rehabilitated.

During the birthday celebration of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Singson in Vigan, Ms Arroyo also endorsed a project that was credited to the former close friend of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Ms Arroyo said she supported a project of Singson to establish freeports in the province.

A Chinese firm was to invest $100 million in the project, according to Malacañang.

The Arroyo administration has been enticing China to invest in mining and infrastructure in the Philippines. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau with a report by Gil Cabacungan Jr., in Manila*

Study notes fertilizer overuse in Ilocos farms

LAOAG CITY—RESEARCHERS OF A STATE-run university here have advised farmers to go slow on the use of commercial fertilizer after a study showed that excessive fertilizer has induced the production of high nitrate content in the agricultural lands of a farming village.

In his study, Antonio Fariñas, a professor at the Mariano Marcos State University College of Agriculture and Forestry, said the high nitrate content of a farming area in Barangay Magnuang in Batac, Ilocos Norte, has seeped into groundwater sources there.

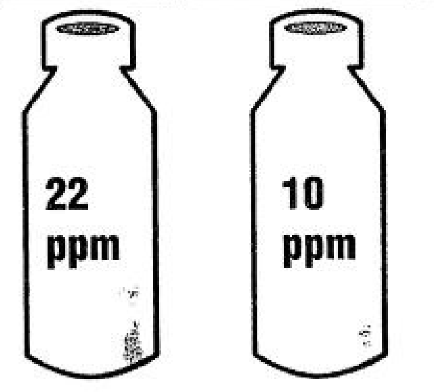
The study, conducted from January to December 2004, focused on a 265-hectare land devoted to vegetable farming.

Fariñas presented his paper during consultations of the provincial board's environment and natural resources committee on Tuesday in preparation for the first provincial environmental summit in September.

He said farmers have been applying too much fertilizer during the dry season, using as much as 450 kilograms per hectare. He said this exceeded the recommended 150 kg per hectare.

Based on the study, water samples collected during the dry season showed 22 parts per million (ppm) of nitrogen which were way above the World Health Organization standard of 10 ppm (or 10 milligram for every liter of water).

Too generous with fertilizers



Collected sample
WHO standard

Experts said a high level of nitrate in drinking water is a potential human health threat, especially to infants who could develop methaemoglobinaemia or the "blue baby" syndrome.

"Farmers [in Magnuang] are applying fertilizer more than what is required. When the farmlands are irrigated, the nitrate seeps down to the groundwater," Fariñas said.

"It is still possible to have a no-nitrate groundwater by going slow on fertilizers."

He said local farmers have been using chemical fertilizers since the Green Revolution project of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

He said the study showed that groundwater sources would likely be contaminated with nitrate where there was excessive use of fertilizer on crops such as tomato, eggplant and sweet pepper.

"Farmers must be told that they are not only overspending in using fertilizer but likewise endangering the lives of younger children and infants," he said.

He said most rural villages are still using water from dug wells as their drinking sources.

Board Member Mariano Marcos II, the provincial board's environment committee chair, organized the provincial environmental summit steering committee (PESSC) to implement a multisectoral system of environmental management in Ilocos Norte.

Fariñas' study is part of the environmental concerns that the committee would try to address in a proposed provincial environmental code. *Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Logging syndicate uses tribesmen as 'human carabaos'

LUCENA CITY—ILLEGAL LOGGERS have resorted to using tribesmen in the Sierra Madre to haul logs out of the mountain's threatened jungles.

A delegation of the Adhikain ng mga Grupong Taong Katutubo na Nagtatanggol (Agta) reported to the environmentalist group Tanggol Kalikasan the harassment they get from illegal loggers in Sierra Madre.

The group of tribesmen lives in Sitio Baykuran, a mountain settlement in Pagsangahan village in General Nakar, Quezon.

The group said some members of the Agta tribe are being used by illegal loggers based in Tanay, Rizal to bring down logs.

The group's members requested anonymity for fear of reprisal from the illegal logging syndicate.

According to them, tribesmen are used like "human carabaos" to haul logs out of the mountain. They are paid P2 per board foot.

Each tribesman hauls out between 30 to 40 board feet per trip out of the mountain.

Upon reaching the river, the logs are tied to the tribesmen who pull these upstream until they reach the pickup point near Daraitan village. It's the exit route to Tanay.

The second phase of the job normally lasts for two days and

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Gloria Arroyo
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President
Republic of the Philippines

It is our delight at the Securities and Exchange Commission to somehow be a part of Philam Asset Management, Inc.'s Fifth Annual Awards and extend our warmest congratulations to the outstanding sales achievers for 2005!

The Commission carries out its mandate of investor protection through investor education, together with full disclosure and a rigorous enforcement program. Thus, it is a pleasure to know that your organization gives special recognition to agents who have contributed immensely to the education of the investing public by introducing them to mutual fund investments. Every effort to educate our investors is greatly valued, and we consider it a bonus if this leads to exemplary sales performance.

To the top performers, keep up your winning streaks, to better inspire other sales agents to join your league!

FE B. BARIN
Chairperson
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Congratulations to all Awardees of Philam Asset Management, Inc.'s Fifth Annual Awards.

Despite the many challenges of 2005, including a change in accounting standards for bond funds and the release of more competitive products vying for the same pesos of investors, many members of our Philam Group sales force continued to do well in sales and referrals.

It's no wonder then that PAMI continues to have the most number of individual investors in the country. This is advantageous to other investors, assuring them that the exit of any one large investor does not negatively impact the Net Value of any of the managed funds. PAMI's strong financial management and compliance culture also makes it an attractive first choice with Filipinos. And every investor knows that the two best names in financial security stand behind PAMI – Philamlife and AIG. So how can they go wrong!

With more and more Filipinos becoming investment conscious and focused on wealth accumulation and management, we need intensified efforts from the Philam Group sales forces to preach the good news of PAMI mutual funds around the country. I hope our Awardees will continue to do well in the future months and encourage other agents or sales counselors to join them.

Congratulations and keep up the great work!

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Cecilia Melendres/Ismael Melendres Jr.
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Rosario Salientes
Salientes and Gonzalez Associates
Top Referring Unit Manager

Ma. Annaliza Bartolome
Melendres Associates
Top Referring Agent

Outstanding Agents
Aurelin Fernando
Ma. Leticia Allado
Valerie Wong de Leon
Joseph Vincent Tiamson
Remedios Ngo
Emma Yuhico
Domingo Reyes
Francisco Henares
Lourdes Del Mundo

Outstanding Unit Managers
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Lourdes Del Mundo
Remedios Ngo
Cecilia Melendres
Valerie Wong de Leon
Gregorio Tongko
Arizaleta Tiamson
Jaime Paraiso
Emma Yuhico

Outstanding Agency Managers
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Rosario Salientes/Veronica Gonzalez
Henry Espiritu/Nancy Bautista
Gregorio Tongko
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Edna Gan
Merton Deveza

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Arturo Muyco (Visayas)
Eleuterio Tubo (Mindanao)

Unit Managers
Nelia Laudico (Luzon)
Contessa May Santos (Visayas)
Charito Azarias (Mindanao)

Agency Managers
Antonia Lucresia Nicdao/
Eric Eusebio Nicdao (Luzon)
Concepcion Gonzaga (Visayas)
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Forests get new hope in tree cloning project

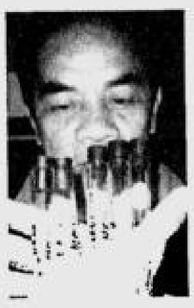
By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—EFFORTS TO save the country's endangered forests got a big boost recently when the Department of Environment and Natural Resources adopted tree cloning as part of its reforestation programs.

Cloning trees is not really a new approach, forestry experts said.

But the Cordillera's mountain ranges and protected parks are headed to become the first to benefit on a large scale from the scientific process of propagating trees and other planting materials.

The DENR is about to operate its largest tree-cloning facility at Pacdal here, a P15-million state of the art complex built on a 7,000-square meter lot that hosts, among other things, seed and tissue culture laboratories.



IN THESE test tubes lie the future of endangered tree species, says Nestor de Guzman, nursery in charge of the DENR Cordillera's first clonal tree nursery complex. DELMAR CARIÑO

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes will lead DENR officials in inaugurating the facility tomorrow, to be officially called "clonal forest nursery complex."

"It is the department's biggest clonal area since it is the first to have a seed, cuttings and tissue laboratories in one complex," Samuel Penafiel, DENR Cordillera regional executive director, said.

"With the region's mossy forests and native trees slowly disappearing, we expect the complex to give our reforestation efforts a big help," he said.

Other clone stations in the country do mostly research but the complex here would produce and distribute planting materials, he said.

The complex's target is to mass-produce "clones" of the region's best kinds of pine trees and other endangered and endemic tree species.

The cloned species will be propagated to serve as planting materials in forests whose green covers and biodiyersitry have been seriously damaged, Penafiel said.

"Later on, the complex will include the cloning of genetically superior species of orchids, bamboos, fruit trees and other rare trees," he said.

The region is rich in yakal, molave, sangilo and oak but they can only bear fruits and seeds once in three to five years, he said.

"These trees can be developed in this complex even during their off season," he said.

Nestor de Guzman, forester and nursery in charge, said the cloning would focus on two processes—macrosomatic and microsomatic cloning.

"The first is producing clones by cuttings of desired trees to be raised by way of introducing rooting hormones," he said. "It is the common way of producing clones."

The second, he said, "is the more delicate approach as it seeks to produce clones in the tissue laboratory where the species are developed in test tubes."

Parts of the fruit, stem, leaves or roots of endangered tree species will be taken right from where they grow and will be brought here for laboratory study, he said.

But the tissue laboratory is so sensitive that measures will be adopted to preserve the experiments, De Guzman said.

"The tissue experts who will work in the lab will have to take a bath and wear caps and white suits to avoid contamination," he said.

He said the cuttings area and tissue laboratory will be complemented by a seed laboratory and a hedge garden where seeds and planting materials will be stored and raised.

The complex expects to mass-produce 60,000 seedlings, or cloned planting materials, called "propagules" or "mericlones" every month.

Once it becomes fully operational, the complex will require 10,000 gallons of water daily. Automatic mist sprayers have been installed to keep the cloned materials moist 24 hours a day.

The INQUIRER, in a tour of the complex recently, found samples of cloned trees in test tubes inside the tissue culture laboratory and several grown cloned planting materials in trays and potting bags in the recovery section.

De Guzman said the complex had been inspected by Dr. Mercedes Garcia, professor emeritus of the biotech department of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños, Laguna, and Dr. Marilyn Quimado, UPLB tissue expert, who, he noted, were all praises for the complex's completion.

"The complex is comparable to the tissue laboratories of other Southeast Asian countries," De Guzman quoted the two as saying.

The complex was built under the Itogon integrated watershed management project which Itogon town in Benguet got as a concession from the construction of the San Roque multi-purpose dam in San Manuel, Pangasinan.

Itogon's denuded forests will be the first to receive the cloned planting materials for propagation.

Itogon Mayor Mario Godio welcomed the opening of the complex, saying "it would definitely help save our forests and restore our lost green covers."

Penafiel said the region's mossy forests are fast disappearing due to their massive conversion into vegetable gardens.

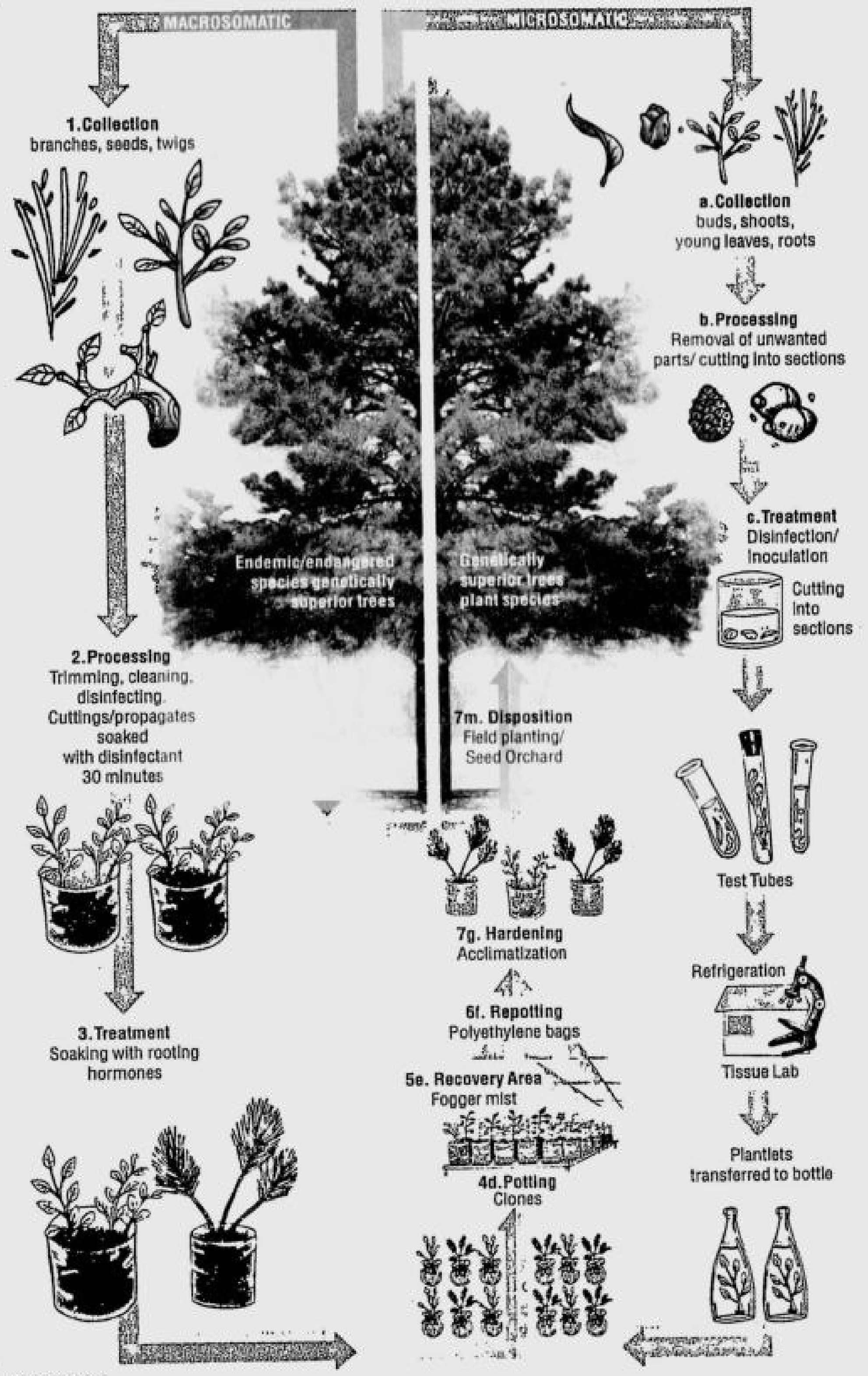
The trend, he said, had been observed in Mt. Sto. Tomas in Tuba, Benguet, and the Benguet side of Mt. Data and Mt. Pulag, two of the country's protected watersheds due to the presence of endemic flora and fauna there.

Penafiel said mossy forests are crucial in developing the forests' organic matter that is needed to protect water resources and prolong the life of watersheds.

He said the complex could help rebuild the mossy forests.

HOW TO CLONE A TREE

There are two scientific ways to clone a tree—macrosomatic (cuttings approach) or microsomatic (tissue culture). Below are the steps for each approach, courtesy of Nick Sapla, forester and project manager of the Itogon Integrated Watershed Project and Renato Pacis, technical man of the clonal nursery complex.


MACROSOMATIC
MICROSOMATIC
1.Collection
branches, seeds, twigs
2.Processing
Trimming, cleaning, disinfecting.
Cuttings/propagates soaked with disinfectant 30 minutes
3.Treatment
Soaking with rooting hormones
Endemic/endangered species genetically superior trees
Genetically superior trees plant species
a.Collection
buds, shoots, young leaves, roots
b.Processing
Removal of unwanted parts/ cutting into sections
c.Treatment
Disinfection/ Inoculation
Cutting into sections
Test Tubes
Refrigeration
Tissue Lab
Plantlets transferred to bottle
4d.Potting
Clones
5e. Recovery Area
Fogger mist
6f. Repotting
Polyethylene bags
7g. Hardening
Acclimatization
7m. Disposition
Field planting/ Seed Orchard

SOURCE: DENR

INQFOGRAPHIC062206: LA MISTADES/ ESAMBO

Mine site landslide kills 5

DAVAO CITY—FIVE PEOPLE were killed, including a 4-year-old girl, when a landslide hit a mining site in Pantukan town in Compostela Valley, the Office of Civil Defense in Southern Mindanao said yesterday.

Carmelito Lupo, chief of the Office of Civil Defense in Southern Mindanao, said at least six houses were buried when mud rushed down on Barangay Napnapan at around 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

Residents in the area immediately launched a search and rescue operation.

Lupo identified the fatalities as Marilyn Magdipig, her 4-year-old daughter Lady Lee, John Rey Pequilo, Jimmy Delihensya and Alex Caldo.

Five other people were injured, he said.

Lupo said intermittent rains triggered the landslide.

He said the OCD had previously tried to convince residents living near the slopes to move out because of threats of landslides.

"The reason they continue to stay in those areas is because these are near their workplace," Lupo said.

The mining areas in the four-province Davao region have been tagged landslide prone areas after a geo-hazard mapping conducted by the Environmental Management Bureau found its soil unstable.

In recent years, dozens of people have died in landslides that occurred in the region, including those in the Mt. Diwata mining area in Monkayo, Compostela Valley.

In Digos City, at least seven houses were swept away when floods hit four barangays on Sunday night.

Disaster officials said thousands of families had been affected by the floods, which were also triggered by rains, in Barangays Zone 1, Tres de Mayo, Cogon and Aplaya.

Lily Bedico, Aplaya barangay chair, said more than a thousand residents in that shoreline village lost livestock and pieces of property.

Bedico said nobody was reported hurt since it occurred early at night when people were still awake. In some areas, the flood water immediately subsided after a few hours.

In Malaybalay City, residents of Barangay Magsaysay in Kibawe, Bukidnon fled their homes after detecting ground cracks last week. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, Eldie Aguirre and Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Logging . . .

From page A15

tribesmen get P3 per board foot at this stage.

The stronger among the tribesmen could pull up to 150 board feet of logs upstream.

"It's a backbreaking job even for a strong carabao. But our men endure the hardship and the indignity. They need money to buy salt, soap and other basic household items," said one Agta tribesman.

He said, however, that the tribal community was not involved in the cutting of trees.

Most of the tribe members survive by rattan gathering and planting mountain crops to sell these to lowlanders.

"We respect Sierra Madre. This is our home and our life. But they also want to survive and we understand them," said one of the tribesmen.

Lawyer Asis Perez, executive director of Tanggol Kalikasan, said a conference of all those involved in protecting Sierra Madre would also take up possible alternative livelihood programs for thousands of small-scale loggers who depend on the mountain.

"Most of the tribesmen are victims. They are not the culprits in forest destruction," said Perez.

Some of the Agta tribesmen said other indigenous peoples are being used by illegal loggers in the mountain.

One said cash donations supposedly to be used as seed fund for rattan gatherers are instead used as capital for illegal logging ventures.

The logging syndicates exploit the tribesmen further by paying them with overpriced goods instead of cash, a tribesman said.

The logging syndicates cut hardwood species like lauan and almaciga, a threatened species.

Almaciga yields a valuable resin known in the world market as Manila copal which is used in the manufacture of varnish and linoleum.

"Narra is now becoming rare due to massive cutting in the past," one tribesman said.

Sierra Madre has been declared a protected area under Proclamation No. 1636. Harvesting of trees and other forest products is highly restricted there and requires special permits from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

AGTA natives in their mountain settlement in Sierra Madre. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Agta delegates also complained that they bear the brunt of government operations against illegal logging.

He said logging syndicates send men to harass the tribesmen.

"They spread word that the Agta is only worth a bullet," one native said.

The DENR's National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (Naectaf) conducted a series of raids last month in Daraitan village, a disputed area between Tanay, Rizal and General Nakar, Quezon.

Environment Undersecretary Roy Kyamko, Naectaf deputy head, said DENR men at checkpoints would be in trouble if illegal logs make it past them.

The group of Agta gave the names of suspected illegal loggers operating in the area.

The tribesmen said at least 30 power saws are used by the loggers.

"They cut trees even inside our reservation area but we couldn't do anything. We brought this matter to the attention of authorities several times in the past but to no avail," said the group leader.

Perez sought the help of Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., head of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar.

Cabuay acknowledged that the logging syndicate has become "too bold."

"I received information that one of my officers was also being threatened by these illegal loggers," he said.

Cabuay said the military would protect the Agta tribesmen.

"Every soldier is also an environmentalist," he said. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Ex-rebels, soldiers, students plant trees

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—FORMER communist rebels and soldiers joined students in planting about 6,000 tree seedlings in a bid to reforest a balding mountain in Maasim, Sarangani province.

The hinterland village of Amsipit was once the battleground of the military and New People's Army (NPA) rebels.

Maasim Mayor Aniceto Lopez Jr. said the event was one of the highlights of the town's annual "Fiesta sa Kabukiran."

"We are here to foster peace and development, no longer to wage war," Lopez said.

Rex Charlie Teves, project officer of Mahintana Foundation, said among those that the soldiers, former rebels and students planted in the area were *nabul* (rosewood), mahogany, *hindang*, *bakan* and Philippine cinnamon trees.

"There can never be sustainable development without balanced ecology. So it is a must for us to protect and restore our ecology," Lopez said.

He urged local officials and residents of Tahakayo, Kyumad and Datal Basak to take care of the planted trees.

"We are not only protecting our ocean, but also the mountains," he said.

Recently, the Maasim government also signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with various schools for a massive tree-planting activity.

The local government unit (LGU) provides the planting materials while the students, through the Community Advancement Training (CAT), planted the seedlings.

In Digos City, officials attending the meeting of the Southern Mindanao Regional Disaster Coordinating Council (RDCC) have criticized the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for embarking on a nationwide tree-planting program without proper coordination with LGUs.

The program, which aims to plant trees along the 1,200-km Pan-Philippine highway, would start on July 22.

Amado Serrano, Davao del Sur provincial irrigation chief, said the project is laudable but the DENR failed to coordinate with LGUs.

He said the coordination would ensure the growth of the trees.

"If the LGUs would support the project, there's a great chance of its success," Serrano said.

Fe Navidad, Digos City social welfare officer, suggested that the DENR establish a test area first before embarking on a nationwide tree-planting program to avoid waste of money.

"We are behind this effort, but the DENR must ascertain that all necessary precautions would be taken to avoid failure," Carmelito Lupo, regional disaster chief, said. *Aquiles Z. Zonio and Eldie S. Aguirre, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

BONDOC Peninsula farmers behind prison bars in Gumaca, Quezon district jail.

PHOTOS BY DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

LAND ROW IN QUEZON

Why are they in jail?

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Lucena City

THE WRINKLED HANDS OF 86-YEAR-OLD SEVERINO Lanot grasped the cold bars in one of the cells at the district jail in Gumaca, Quezon, 196 km southeast of Manila.

> 'It would be better for us to come out and appeal our case in the open than live fugitive lives'

He could barely explain the legalese behind his pathetic presence inside the cramped prison. The only audible words he muttered: "I'm fighting for my land."

On May 31, Lanot, a long-time tiller of the vast Reyes estate in San Andres town in Quezon's Bondoc Peninsula, along with 100 farmers belonging to the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Bondoc Peninsula (KMBP) and their families, went to the Philippine National Police (PNP) headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City, to face 187 criminal cases filed against them by landowners. The charges ranged from qualified theft and estafa to trespassing.

The farmers "surrendered" to evade alleged harassment by their landlords, their lawyers and armed men in the once peaceful peninsula. They are fighting to have portions of coconut plantations in San Narciso, San Francisco and San Andres placed under the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), according to the KMBP.

Thirty-seven of the farmers brought with them the arrest warrants issued against them, leaving the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group no choice but to take them into custody. They were subsequently detained in Gumaca and San Francisco towns in Quezon.

Detention

On June 2, 71 more arrest warrants were served on 18 farmers, said Joanne Fernandez, spokesperson of the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (PEACE) Foundation. At least 16 more facing arrest for qualified theft and estafa gave themselves up to the CIDG on June 8.

Henaro Saul, 43, who was among the first group of farmers who voluntarily surrendered, recounted how policemen, soldiers and armed goons surrounded and barged into his house in Barangay Tala in San Andres one afternoon in April.

He was outside at the time, but he heard the men demanding that he come out. He saw them break the door and frighten his wife and eight children who were asleep.

Saul said he hid until the men left. That day, four farmers were arrested separately in the same town.

"We hid for about six months before we decided to come out in the open and voluntarily surrender to the authorities. The hunted farmers decided that it would be better for us to come out and appeal our case in the open than live fugitive lives," Saul said in Filipino at the Gumaca jail warden's office.

He said he had been a farmer for the past 30 years. "Before me, my grandfather and my father also tilled the piece of land I'm currently farming. Now I'm accused of robbing the fruits of labor of my whole clan," he said, his head shaking in disgust.

He has been charged by the landlords with qualified theft for the coconuts that his forebears had planted.

New People's Army rebels operating in the Bondoc Peninsula "also serve as the private armies of some of the landlords," Saul said. "The NPA is also forcing us to agree to the old system."

Bail for all the accused totaled P1.9 million, excluding the amounts set for the 127 cases pending at the Office of the Provincial Prosecutor, the KMBP said.

187 cases pending

A total of 169 cases are pending at the Regional Trial Court in Gumaca, five more at the Municipal Trial Court, and 13 at the provincial prosecutor's office.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has ordered the prosecutors to review the cases and the Public Attorneys' Office (PAO) to defend them.

But the review was no longer possible since the charges have already been filed in court, Quezon provincial prosecutor Dione Bustonera explained. "We cannot be acting as the defense counsel for the farmers. The claim of the organizations behind the farmers that there was no legal basis in filing the cases has no legal basis at all," he said.

Bustonera noted that the farmers had been presenting a certification from the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) as "proof" of their rightful claim over the contested tracts of land.

"But between a Torrens title of the landowners and a mere certification from the Cenro, the Torrens system will prevail. We could not base our decision on their mere hearsay that they are the rightful owners of the land because the landowner, the Reyes family, has a title. They have legal proofs of land ownership," he said.

Status quo

Since most of the cases of land dispute are pending in court, the status quo in land ownership will prevail in favor of the owners, he said.

He rebutted assertions by lawyers of the farmers that the cases should be classified as "agrarian," and should therefore be resolved by the Department of Agrarian Reform. "How can that be when the farmers are insisting that they are the owners of the land and are not tenants?" the prosecutor said.

Bustonera assailed the PAO officials for telling them to stop filing cases against the farmers. "Why would they order us to stop? It's our job to file cases in court," he said.

He said the huge bail set by the court was "what the law dictates."

Saul's wife Juanita said it was "his decision to surrender and be imprisoned while the case is being heard. I support his decision even if it would be hard for me to raise the family by myself. We don't have the money for his temporary freedom."

She called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to help the farmers.

The growing unrest in coconut haciendas in San Narciso, San Francisco and San Andres was spawned by the successive filing of criminal charges against the tenants and prospective CARP beneficiaries in the big landholdings owned by the Reyes, Matias and Zoleta-Queblar families.

The Reyes properties cover 12,000 hectares in San Narciso and San Andres; Uys, 3,500 ha in San Andres; Matiases, 2,800 ha in San Francisco; and Zoleta-Queblars, 139 ha in San Francisco.

Two scions of the Reyes clan are local executives of San Narciso and Buenavista.

The farmers said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had told them that the land parcels they were tilling were not legally owned by the landlords because these were classified as timberland or untitled alienable and disposable lands, without claimants or with multiple claimants.

Rufo Lorenzo, Cenro chief in the Bondoc Peninsula based in Catanauan town, said some portions of the estates had been classified as timberland and alienable and disposable.

Although a timberland could not be titled under one's name, Lorenzo explained that it could be the subject of a long-term leasehold contract between the government and a qualified party.

"As far as the alienable and disposable lands are concerned, there's a judicial process going for the landlords seeking to effect the titling of the land in their favor," he said.

Legal documents

Most of the vast tracts of land in question are validly owned by the landlords, he added. "They have the titles and the tenurial instruments."

Lorenzo said he had long invited the farmers and the landlords for a dialogue to clarify the situation.

"Unfortunately, the farmers opted to conduct rallies and demonstration rather than meet the landlords and understand the judicial process," he said.

Availing themselves of their right under the leasehold system, most of the farmers refused to pay the landowner's "share" and instead deposited their "rent" to the municipal treasurer.

Most of the cases filed against them involve qualified theft of coconuts, estafa for failure to remit the landlord's shares of the harvest, trespassing, malicious mischief and grave threat.

"It's not only the farmers who are being legally harassed by the landlords. Even DAR personnel, myself included, are facing court suits from the resisting landowners," said Alejandro Cruz, provincial agrarian reform officer.

Cruz acknowledged that CARP land distribution in the peninsula was slow, particularly in San Narciso, San Andres and San Fracisco, because of years of resistance by the landowners.

"They have all the resources to block our efforts and the money to hire good lawyers to challenge our every move in court, further slowing down the process," he said.

"But we now see signs of mellowing resistance. Most of the landowners are now receptive to dialogues. But unfortunately, the farmers now prefer to discuss the issues through rallies and demonstration," Cruz lamented.

He clarified that the agrarian trouble did not reflect the agrarian situation in the whole peninsula.

SEVERINO Lanot, the oldest among Bondoc Peninsula farmers now languishing inside the Gumaca jail.

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

A. The Judicial and Bar Council announces the opening of four positions of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE of the COURT OF APPEALS** in view of the appointment of Justice Arturo D. Brion as Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment and the forthcoming compulsory retirement of (1) Justice Godardo A. Jacinto, on August 20, 2006; (2) Justice Vicente L. Yap, on August 22, 2006; and (3) Justice Santiago J. Ranada Jr., on November 10, 2006.

Applications/recommendations must be submitted **NOT LATER THAN July 12, 2006.** Applicants/recommendees must submit the following to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512 Fax No. 552-9598):

Application Letter/Recommendation Letter with conforme of the recommendee	**6 copies**
Personal Data Sheet (JBC Form I down-loadable from the JBC Website http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph)	**6 copies**
Picture (2x2)	**4 copies**
Certificate of Good Standing or latest Official Receipt from the IBP National Treasurer	**6 copies**
ITR for 2 preceding years	**6 copies**
NBI Clearance	**6 copies**
Transcript of Records	**6 copies**
Police Clearance from place of residence	**6 copies**

B. The JBC also announces that the following are applicants for different judgeship positions:

REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC): (REGION III) – GAPAN & PALAYAN, NUEVA ECIJA: LAPUZ, Antonio Ll. Jr. **(REGION IV) – LUCENA CITY, QUEZON: (Br. 54)** ACAIN, Carlos I.; ARIZALA, Angelo R.; BAGUIO, Celso O.; BALDEO, Expectacion Bautista; BALQUIEDRA, Edgardo P.; CHUA, Elvira Cheng; DELA CRUZ, Eugenio G.; ELEAZAR, Victor Y.; ESPIRITU, Rio T.; GELLA, Victor C.; JUSI, Uldarico M.; MAYNIGO, Wilfredo L.; MENDOZA, Ernesto C.; SANTILLAN, Jose G. Jr.; SUAREZ, Emma Barrion; TOLENTINO, Romulo S.; VILLANUEVA, Daniel C.; VILLANUEVA, Romeo L. **ANTIPOLO CITY, RIZAL: (Br. 74)** ACUÑA, Severina Aguilar; AMANTE, Jason A.; ANDOY, Teresito A.; AQUINO, Fernando F. Jr.; ASIS, Josephus Joanes H.; AUMENTADO, Reymundo L.; BADANDO, Miguel Y.; BANDAY, Jose; BAEZA, Bienvenido V. Jr.; BALIGOD, Rommel C.; BAUA, Arnulfo E.; BENAVIDEZ, Pastor J.; BUENA, Teofista Manalo; CACANINDIN, Felicitas Laron; CAMACHO, Arturo V.; CATUBAY, Santos V. Jr.; CEZAR, Amorfina C.; CLAVE, Hilda Sacay; CONCEPCION, Julius M.; CORPUZ, Ferdinand M.; DABALOS, Nestor M.; DAYDAY, Braulio; DECHAVEZ, Joseph M.; DEYNATA, Purita Mercado; DISTOR, Marcial C.; DIZON Medwin S.; DULDULAO, Ismael T.; DUQUE, Perla Young; FAJARDO, Alejandro D. Jr.; FERNANDEZ, Josephine Zarate; FLORES, Enrique L. Jr.; FORTUNO, Jose C.; GELLADA, Cecilio B. Jr.; GUERRERO, Fernando Y. Jr.; GUEVARA, Felicitas Asinas; IGNALAGA, Ma. Consejo Gengos; JAMOLIN, Conrado M.; JURADO, Alessandro D.; LABASTIDA, Philip G.; LAZARO, Mary Josephine Dela Peña; LORBES, Salvador D.; MACARAIG, Virgilio V.; MANUEL, Marlina Millan; MONSANTO, Stephen L.; MORENTE, Manuel A. Jr.; PADAEN, Alejandro A.; PAGAYATAN, Lourdes Taay; PAGDILAO, Elizabeth Flores; PAMULAR, Ramon D.; PAZ, Noel B.; PEREZ, Angelo C.; REYES, Eduardo R.; RIVERA, Raul A.; RODULFO, Juan T.; SIMON, Luis F.; SISON, Dionisio C.; STA. CRUZ, Manuel B. Jr.; SULLA, Petronilo A. Jr.; TIMOLA, Wilfredo V.; TOBIA, Robert H.; TOLENTINO, Romulo S.; VELASCO, Armando C.; VENTURANZA, Alberto E.; VER, Francis A.; VIDAD, Lucas R.; VILLANUEVA, Daniel C.; YEE, Caridad Villamor; ZURAEK, Merianthe Manzano **(REGION VI) – ILOILO CITY: (Br. 32)** AGUILAR, Narciso M.; BAEZA, Bienvenido V. Jr.; BARTE, Felixberto P.; BIONAT, Jeremy V.; BRILLANTES, Wenifredo E.; CAMARISTA, Andres Wilhelm B.; CASTROJAS, Rudy P.; DEL CASTILLO, Filpia Deligero; DEMAISIP, Jose P.; DIAMANTE, Domingo P.; DIVINAGRACIA, Elsa Roldan; DORONILA, Arturo G.; GO, Kathrine Au; GONZALES, Rene B.; GUERRERO, Fernando Y. Jr.; JURAO, Sylvia Gamara; JUSTALERO, Globert J.; LADRIDO, Ma. Daniela Olmedo; MANUEL, Marlina Millan; PASCO, Lyna Brotarlo; PIA, Armando V.; RAVANERA, Manuel R.; REY, Anita Jamerlan; SODUSTA, Immanuel L.; TUCLAUD, Edgardo Y.; ZERRUDO, Alexis A.

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES (MTCC): (REGION I) – BAGUIO CITY, BENGUET: (Br. 1) BACBAC, Gail M.; BADOL, Pauline Osio; BAEZA, Bienvenido V. Jr.; BONDAD, Ruth Dulaycan; CABREROS, Harriet Cawi; CLEMENS, Myrna Molintas; CORPUZ, Ferdinand M.; GALACGAC, Marvin A.; HUMIDING, Jennifer Palaguitang; MABALOT, Roberto R.; MALINGAN, Adolfo R.; MAYAM-O, Pedro G.; PAMINTUAN, Norman V.; PARAYNO, Ferdinand D.; REYES, Remedios B.; SENSON, Romeo B.; TAGUDAR, Evelyn Cacho; TANO, Ma. Theresa Guadaña; YARTE, George H. Jr. **(REGION III) – OLONGAPO CITY, ZAMBALES: (Br. 5)** BAUTISTA, Josephine Gonzales; BEDAÑA, Gina Amatong; MADDELA, Tomas B. III; PAMINTUAN, Norman V.; QUINTANO, Ireneo M.; RECITIS, Ildefonso F.; ZARSADIAS, Ramon P. **(REGION VI) – (Brs. 5,6,7,8,9 & 10) – ILOILO CITY:** FRESNIDO, Ma. Zaida Quilantang

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT (MTC)/MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC): (REGION VI) – LAMBUNAO, ILOILO: TUPAS, Milo M. **(REGION XII) – SULTAN KUDARAT/PARANG – MATANOG-BULDON-BARIRA/DINAIG-DATU-PIANG-PIANG-TALAYAN, MAGUINDANAO:** BACARAMAN, Ali Ombra R.; BEDOL, Lintang H.; PIANG, Annabelle Dumato Piang; SANIEL, Leonardo S.; SINSUAT, Mando V. Jr.

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants not later than 02 JULY 2006 to the JBC Secretariat.

The JBC also invites the public and applicants for various judicial posts to visit the JBC Website **http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph** for announcement of vacancies and other information about the JBC; and its processes.

20 June 2006

(Sgd.) **MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA**
Clerk of Court &
Ex Officio Secretary

(PDI–June 22, 2006)

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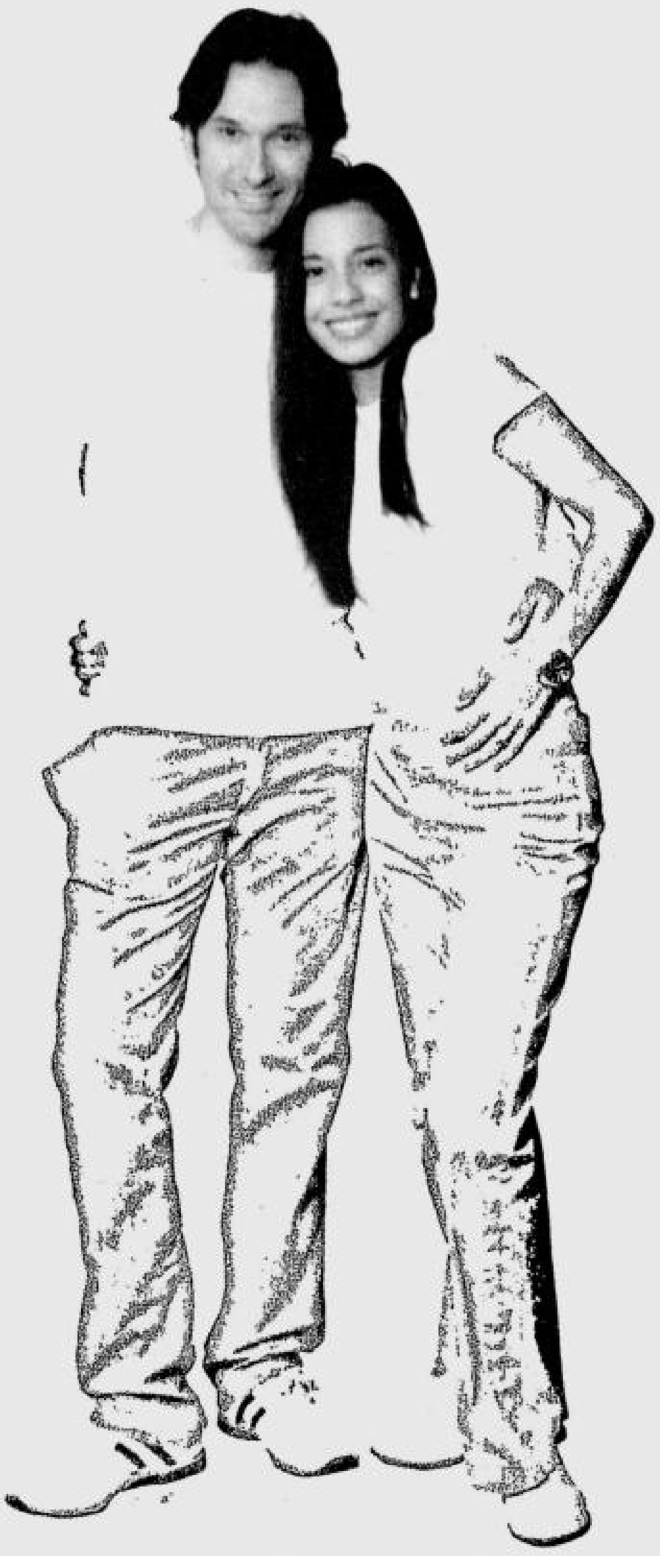

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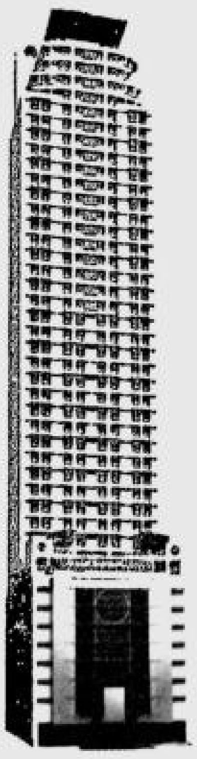

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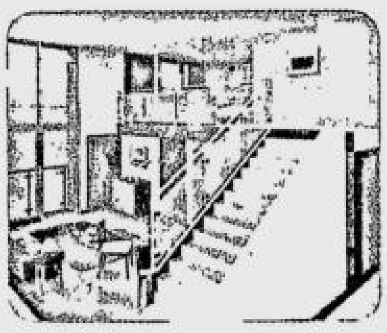

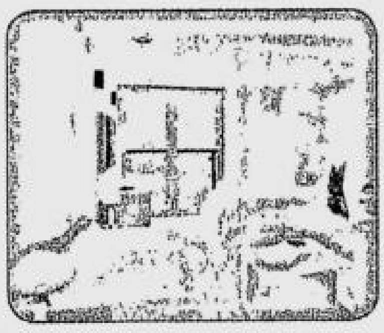

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Regine sues 2 in vehicle sale

Songbird cites warranty breach for 'defective' van

VELASQUEZ: Money back, please. PDI PHOTO

By DJ Yap

SINGER REGINE VELASQUEZ has filed a P203,773 damage suit against two men who allegedly sold her a defective van which she claimed barely made it to her garage after a test run in Baguio City.

Velasquez charged Severino Oliva and Derick Oliveros with breach of warranty with damages in the Quezon City Hall of Justice.

In a civil complaint, the singer said she bought a 2003 model silver-gold Ford E-150 van (plate number RBU 484) from Oliva, with car dealer Oliveros serving as an intermediary, last year.

The two had assured her that the van was brand new and in perfect condition. They even gave her a warranty for it, she said.

In August 2005, Velasquez said she gave a down payment of P1.4 million, after agreeing to buy the vehicle for P3.5 million under a contract of sale she had signed with Oliva.

The papers for the vehicle were thus transferred to her name, through a loan she had secured from the bank, she added.

Velasquez said she started using the van almost immediately. After two weeks, she brought it to Baguio to test its running condition. But on the way home, the vehicle could no longer run beyond 20 kph. "In fact, the van could hardly make it to my garage," she added. The singer said she immediately called up Oliveros who told her to have the vehicle checked at Ford Pasong Tamo.

The checkup revealed that the vehicle's overdrive function, converter clutch, pressure control solenoid and shift solenoid were faulty, among other defects, Velasquez added. The singer said she asked Oliva to take back the van and return the down payment minus P200,000, since the purchase price had been considerably reduced. But Oliva rejected the offer, she stated.

In her complaint, Velasquez said Oliveros and Oliva had failed to comply with the warranties and representations under the sale contract. She asked to be paid P3,773 in actual damages, P100,000 in moral damages, P50,000 in exemplary damages and P50,000 in attorney's fees.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **3 suspected kidnap gang members nabbed** /A20
- **Mercury drug store in Parañaque robbed** /A20
- **San Juan bans burning of garbage in open areas** /A20
- **Makati peaceful despite 2 explosions –Binay** /A20

No sign of treasure dig in QC school after 4th search mission

by DJ Yap

FOR THE FOURTH TIME THIS year, Quezon City officials yesterday inspected the campus of the Philippine School of Business Administration on Aurora Boulevard for signs of treasure diggings but found nothing.

Two complainants who had exposed the alleged illegal excavations in the school to search for the fabled Yamashita gold directed city officials to three purported digging sites, but they could not find the opening.

The investigation, however, will continue since the safety of the students and teachers was at stake, and considering the threat of earthquakes undermining the stability of the school structures, officials said.

Another inspection is set for today. Officials want the alleged digging sites, which include a dimly lit warehouse and a grassy patch, cleared of any obstruction, so they can get a better look, said Quezon City Councilor Dante de Guzman.

Antonio Magtalas and Rodrigo Manahan, who had claimed they were part of the treasure hunt that ended five years ago, showed the building officials the areas where the diggings were supposedly done.

They claimed that there was a 400-feet hole underneath the PSBA buildings as a result of the diggings, the openings of which they claimed they had cemented when they stopped looking for the fabled Yamashita gold.

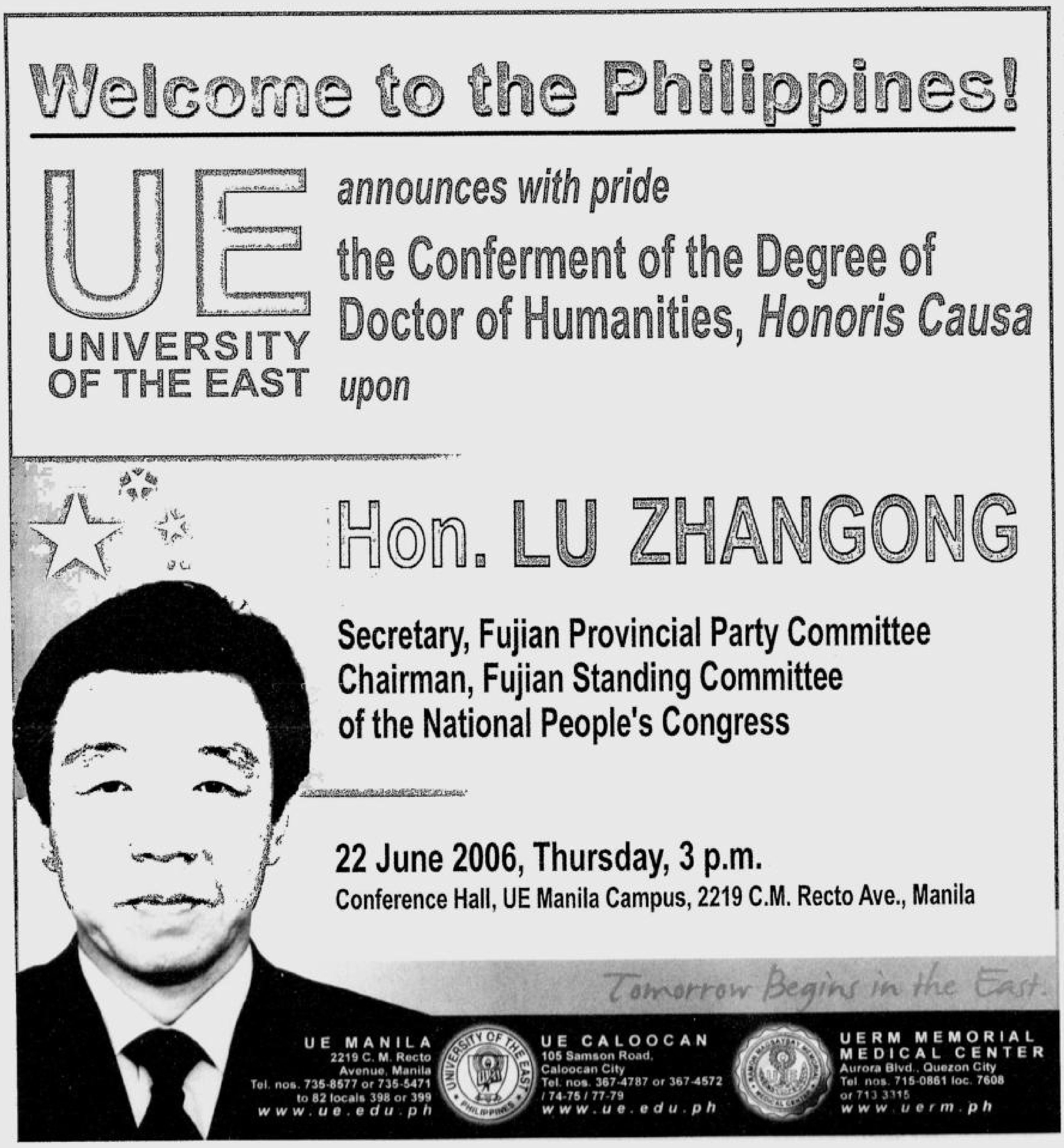
One of the sites was a rest house of President Manuel Quezon that had been turned into a warehouse, said De Guzman, who chairs the blue ribbon committee of the city council, which is investigating the issue.

"The place was filled with broken chairs and desks, and it was very dark so it was hard to see anything," he said, adding that he found the complainants' story "credible."

"Based on my personal observation, the witness seemed very familiar with the area. He seemed to know what he was talking about," he added.

But city engineer Joselito Cabungcal said there was only a small possibility that the allegation was true, since all four inspections, including one conducted by the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences, had yielded negative results.

A private engineering company hired by PSBA also certified that no evidence of treasure diggings turned up after two days of inspection, upon orders of the city's Office of the Building Official, which required an independent probe.



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Hon. LU ZHANGONG, UE's 21st *Honoris Causa* Awardee

The Honorable Lu Zhangong is the Secretary of the Committee for Fujian Province of China's Central Party Committee (CPC) and the Chairman of the CPC Fujian Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Hon. Lu is UE's 21st Honoris Causa awardee—the sixth foreign dignitary to receive an honorary degree from the University and the sixth to specifically be awarded an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree by UE.

Sec. Lu has been a longtime member of the all-powerful Central Committee of the CPC and is thus one of China's highest government officials. Sec. Lu's ascent within the CPC, which he joined back in 1975, exemplifies both his capacity for exceptional leadership and steadfast readiness to be of service to his country. He has held key CPC positions in his birth province of Zhejiang in Jiaxing City, in Hebei Province, in the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and, since 2001, in Fujian Province—where some 95% of Chinese-Filipinos, including no less than UE's Honorary Chairman, Dr. Lucio C. Tan, derive their ancestry.

Sec. Lu's continued service to Fujian Province has seen him assume the positions of Deputy Secretary of the CPC's Fujian Committee; Fujian Vice Governor; and Fujian Governor. In December 2004, the CPC appointed him as Secretary of its Committee for Fujian Province and Chairman of the Fujian Provincial Standing Committee. Furthermore, Sec. Lu is now a member of the Central Committee of the 16th National People's Congress.

Sec. Lu's strategic vision of setting up a Cross Strait West Coast Economic Zone in January 2004 has become a national movement in China. With this project, Sec. Lu is now leading Fujian Province towards a new development platform.

Secretary Lu's visit to the Philippines—the first time for the highest-ranking official of Fujian Province—augurs well for an era of more intensive and extensive cooperation between Manila and Fujian, the resulting developments from which can only benefit the peoples of both places.

METROBRIEFS

San Juan bans burning of garbage

WA WA-
WAN TAWSAN?!

BURNING your garbage on sidewalks or public places? Think again. If you live in San Juan, it will also cost you up to P1,000 in fines. The San Juan Municipal Council has banned the "outdoor or open-space burning of domestic or solid waste" in the small town, saying the bad habit "causes pollution, harms the environment and emits a foul smell." Councilor Dante Santiago, who introduced the ordinance, noted that "some irresponsible and callous citizens continue to dump and burn their garbage in their lots, at street corners (and on) sidewalks." He defined solid waste as "all discarded household and commercial waste, nonhazardous institutional waste, ports/harbor and industrial waste, street sweepings, construction debris, agriculture waste, garden and yard waste and other nonhazardous/nontoxic solid waste." Under the ordinance, the town's Solid Waste Management Office would put up signs to warn residents not to burn their garbage. It also tasked policemen, "Task Force Disiplina" operatives, barangay officials and watchmen to apprehend violators. First-time violators will be given a warning. Second-time violators, on the other hand, will be slapped with a P500 fine while third-time offenders will be fined P1,000.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Drugstore robbed

THE EMPLOYEES of a 24-hour drugstore in Parañaque City were jolted awake when six armed men barged into the establishment early morning yesterday. Two customers were wounded when they refused to turn over their valuables to the robbers. SP01 Rodolfo Balacuay, case investigator, said in his report that six armed men entered the Mercury Drugstore branch on Sitio Evacom, Barangay San Dionisio at around 5:10 a.m. Two customers identified as Mario Corriganto and Mylene Corales sustained gunshot wounds when they refused to give their belongings to the robbers, said Balacuay. Corriganto was shot in the stomach while Corales sustained a wound in her left hand. They were rushed to the Parañaque Medical Center after the incident. According to city police chief, Supt. Ronald Estilles, they could not yet determine the amount of cash the drugstore had lost to the robbers since its management had declined to give them any information. The robbers, however, were able to run off with around P10,000 worth of valuables which they had taken from the store employees and customers. The security guard, Roel Gecoso, told the police that four men armed with .38-cal revolvers disarmed him while two others announced the holdup. "The suspects helped each other gather the store's earnings for the day and strip the customers of their personal belongings," Gecoso said. The police said they would soon release a sketch of the suspects based on descriptions given by witnesses. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

3 suspected kidnap gang members nabbed

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THREE SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF A NOTORIOUS kidnap-for-ransom (KFR) group victimizing Chinese-Filipino businessmen in Metro Manila have been arrested in successive operations conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

The suspects were identified as Andres Lucero, 35, and Fromencio Enacmal, 27, both natives of Leyte and residents of Rosario, Pasig City. Also arrested was Gualberto Castillaja, 33, also a native of Leyte and resident of Paliparan, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Lucero served as the driver of the group while Fromencio and Castillaja guarded the victims of the Calvin Lagado-Noel Enacmal Waray-Waray KFR and armed robbery group, which had been responsible for a string of kidnap and armed robbery cases in the metropolis, the NBI said.

Fromencio, the brother of group leader Noel, was arrested last June 1 in Pasig City. He later told the police about the whereabouts of the two other suspects. Castillaja was nabbed in Cavite the same day while Lucero was arrested only last Monday.

"The Waray-Waray group is the most active KFR group in Metro Manila," NBI National Capital Region (NCR) Office chief Ruel Lasala said in a press conference yesterday.

"Despite the group's lack of sophisticated communication equipment and vehicles, its members are notorious because of their brazenness in kidnapping their victims," Lasala said, adding that the suspects shot anyone who interfered in their illegal operations.

While other KFR groups are careful, the Waray-Waray Group members carry out kidnappings in the presence of many people, the NBI official said.

Lasala said the Lagado-Enacmal Waray-Waray Group was behind the abduction of Wilbert Uy and a certain Mr. Dy in Quezon City. It was also responsible for the kidnapping of a certain Mr. Ty near Binondo Church in Manila, he added.

"Apart from KFR activities, this group was also involved in a number of pawnshop, payroll and bank robberies," NBI acting director Nestor Mantaring said. "The suspects' arrest was timely because they were planning to kidnap another victim with their leader Noel and his brother Edwin," he added.

Lasala said former Waray-Waray leaders Lagado and Rogelio Morfe, who were arrested by the NBI in 2004, had identified the three suspects as their accomplices during tactical interrogation.

"The three suspects were nabbed on the basis of arrest warrants for double murder and robbery with homicide," Lasala added.

The NBI has launched a manhunt for Noel and his other companions.

RALPH LAUREN

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation officials present to media three suspected members of a kidnap for ransom and armed robbery gang believed to be behind several abduction cases in the metropolis. REM ZAMORA

Quake drill taught students lesson or two

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.

A day after participating in the nationwide earthquake drill, hundreds of students at the Rosario Elementary School in Pasig City quickly abandoned their classrooms after seeing thick smoke coming from the school's sewing room yesterday morning.

FO1 Salvador Norberte told the INQUIRER that a cabinet full of corrected test papers inside the sewing room, which was on the school building's second floor, had caught fire.

School custodians quickly used fire extinguishers to put out the small fire. The incident was over in five minutes and firemen had not even arrived on the scene.

Although the fire caused some students to panic, they quickly filed out of their classrooms when they saw the smoke.

Where there's smoke

"They just implemented what they did during the earthquake drill when they saw the smoke," assistant to the principal Susanna Cruz told the INQUIRER.

"Of course, this was an actual incident, so some our students also panicked," she added.

Norberte said the fire broke out at 8:45 a.m. yesterday. Classes were already being held in most of the classrooms but the sewing room, on the mezzanine of the second floor, was vacant.

Pupils and teachers outside suddenly noticed smoke coming out of the room. School custodians called up the fire station and started dousing the flames using fire extinguishers.

"We have about 60 classrooms here. They are all equipped with fire extinguishers," Cruz said, proud of the support the school was getting from the city government. Rosario Elementary School is one of the biggest elementary schools in Pasig City in terms of population. It has 4,367 students, Cruz said.

Investigation

Norberte said they would investigate the small fire, hinting that it might have been deliberately set. "This could be a deliberate attempt," he said, adding that someone could have used a match or a lighter.

Cruz said they would also investigate their own students, especially those they suspected to be smokers.

"Maybe some of them wanted to hide their cigarettes, so they hid cigarette butts inside the cabinet," Cruz added.

Makati safe despite 2 explosions, says Binay

By Tarra V. Quismundo

DESPITE THE TWO EXPLOSIONS THAT took place this month in the city, Makati officials were quick to assure residents yesterday that the country's financial district remains "very peaceful."

"We want to assure people in embassies and buildings that everything is under control. You don't have to worry. But we need you to get involved. Please report to us any untoward incidents in your buildings," Mayor Jejomar Binay told members of the diplomatic corps, barangay officials and security personnel of the city's establishments during a command conference yesterday.

Binay called for the emergency security command, the first for the year, to assess the threats to Makati in view of the explosion in front of the Grepalife Building on Gil Puyat Avenue on June 6. This was followed by Monday's incident in which a grenade blew up in front of the Aquaventure House in Barangay San Antonio.

Overreaction

"It's very peaceful here. There has just been some overreaction to the incidents. We have force multipliers to help the police," city police chief, Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio, told reporters.

At the same time, both officials dispelled rumors circulating about a threat to bomb the RCBC Plaza on Ayala Avenue corner Gil Puyat (formerly Buendia), a Yuchengco-owned building housing seven embassies and offices of the European Union and United Nations.

"That is the worst case of a rumor making the rounds. If there's any secure building in Makati, it's RCBC Plaza. It's the last place where an incident of bombing would occur," said Binay, adding that at least 60 policemen are assigned to guard the building everyday.

Valerio, meanwhile, said that the police found not just one, but two grenades in front of the Aquaventure House.

The second grenade was found several hours after the first one exploded in front of the building located at the corner of St. Paul and Mayapis Streets at 6:15 a.m. Monday.

Second grenade

"There was another grenade found. But it was just a practice grenade," Valerio said, adding that the explosive was a decoy that would not detonate.

The building watchman had earlier reported that some men had hurled a "hard object" at the glass-paneled facade of the building a few hours before Monday's explosion.

The impact left a hole in one of the glass panels but the police did not find what had created the hole. They later found the second grenade in one of the plant boxes in front of the building.

Marine top honcho's resignation worrisome

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE RESIGNATION OF COL. ORLANdo de Leon as the Marine Corps chief of staff is worrisome.

I don't know much about De Leon, but I heard from his fellow Marines that he's a fine officer. And like most Marine officers he's a Mindanao combat veteran.

When a respected officer like De Leon quits as the elite military unit's No. 3 man, there must be something wrong with the leadership.

By "leadership," I don't mean only Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga, Marine commandant, but the entire military establishment that goes all the way up to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

There must be something wrong with the way the President, the commander in chief of the Armed Forces, is handling affairs in the military.

The President can say she's relegating the management of the Armed Forces to the top generals.

But the question is, has she chosen the best generals to lead? Are her generals loved and respected by the foot soldiers and field officers?

Perhaps the President should take a second look at the leadership of the Marine Corps and even the Philippine Navy, the corps' mother unit.

The Commander in Chief should ask around how Allaga and Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga, Navy flag officer in command, are rated by their subordinates.

I understand Allaga's predecessor, Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, was loved and respected by subordinate officers and rank-and-file soldiers. Miranda was sacked after the standoff in February at the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio.

If Allaga and Mayuga are not respected by the men, the lack of respect goes up to the appointing power, the Commander in Chief.

De Leon was probably voicing out the general sentiments in the whole Marine Corps, as well as in the Navy, when he said in his resignation letter to Allaga: "I know that the political pressure (has) now become more unbearable for the Corps and your leadership."

What was the "political pressure" that De Leon referred to?

Who is being pressured, and who is exerting the pressure?

* * *

Data compiled by the National Statistics Coordination Board (NSCB) show that seven of the country's poorest provinces are in Mindanao, with Zamboanga del Norte on top of the list.

On the other hand, the 10 "least poor" or better off provinces are all in Luzon.

This is not surprising, considering that the seat of government is located in Imperial Manila, which is in the island of Luzon.

How ironic that Mindanao should be the cradle of the poorest provinces.

It is the country's richest island in terms of agricultural, aquatic and natural resources.

This only goes to show that the national government cares the least about Mindanao, showering much of its affection on Luzon.

The uncaring attitude of Imperial Manila toward Mindanao is being returned in kind by Mindanaoans.

The new Mindanao Independence Movement, led by prominent Christian and Muslim inhabitants, is gaining more and more adherents every single day.

One morning the government in Manila might be jolted by the news that Mindanao has declared its independence from the Republic.

WITNESS ONE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC PERIODS
OF CHANGE IN HISTORY...
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WORLDBRIEFS

2 abducted US soldiers found dead

BAGHDAD—The bodies of two US soldiers kidnapped south of Baghdad before being tortured and killed were recovered Tuesday, and an insurgent group led by al-Qaida in Iraq said it had slit their throats. "Coalition forces have recovered what we believe are the remains of our soldiers, who disappeared in the vicinity of Yusifiyah," US-led coalition forces spokesperson Major General William Caldwell told reporters. "Their remains have been transported to a coalition base today and will be transported to the US for a positive DNA verification and for an autopsy to see how they died." Kristian Menchaca, 23, and Thomas L. Tucker, 25, went missing Friday night after they came under attack at a traffic control point near Yusifiyah, an insurgent-stronghold along the Euphrates River.

AFP

Floods kill 112 in Indonesia

JAKARTA—Rescuers retrieved scores of bodies Wednesday from villages ravaged by floods and landslides on Indonesia's Sulawesi Island, bringing the death toll to 112, officials said. Some 100 other people were reported missing on the island, large swaths of which have been battered by incessant rains since Monday, swelling rivers and inundating hundreds of houses and rice fields. "We are overwhelmed with the bodies here," said Bachtiar, head of a public health center in the worst-hit district of Sinjai, a coastal region in southern Sulawesi. "We need help, especially body bags. Efendi Rajaloa, coordinator of search and rescue in Sinjai, said 104 bodies have been recovered, while about 90 others were missing.

AP

Liberia's Taylor in The Hague for trial

THE HAGUE—Liberia's former president Charles Taylor, once one of Africa's most feared warlords, arrived in the The Hague Tuesday for his long-awaited war crimes trial for some of the worst atrocities committed in Africa. Taylor landed in the Netherlands at 7:14 p.m. and was led from the airplane with his hands tied into vans waiting to take him to a detention center in The Hague around 20 km away, where he arrived some 30 minutes later. The 58-year old warlord-turned-president will eventually be tried by a branch of the Sierra Leone tribunal using the premises of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. He is being held in the same detention center that housed former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic who died here in March while on trial for war crimes, charged before the UN court for the former Yugoslavia.

AFP

Israeli air strike kills 3 children

GAZA CITY—An Israeli air strike targeting Palestinian militants killed three children in Gaza Tuesday, only hours after Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas demanded that militants end rocket attacks on Israel or be responsible for reprisals. Fourteen other people were wounded in the strike, including five children, while the two men said to be members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades escaped from the car targeted by the strike, Palestinian sources said. In a statement, Abbas "condemned this new crime, at a time when the Palestinian leadership is making efforts to preserve the ceasefire, and exhorted the international community to fulfill its responsibilities to stop the Israeli escalation."

AFP

Anglican split over gay bishops

CHICAGO—The US Episcopal Church on Tuesday rejected a temporary moratorium on the controversial ordination of gay bishops, heightening the risk of a split in the global Anglican church. Delegates at the Episcopal Church's general convention in Columbus, Ohio rejected the motion two days after electing a female leader for the first time in a move that led one diocese to begin the process of leaving the US branch and elicited comments of concern from the world body. Most of the branches of the 77-million strong Anglican Communion around the world have resisted elevating women to bishops and oppose ordaining homosexuals.

AFP

'Noah's Ark' for world's plants

OSLO—A "DOOMSDAY VAULT" CARVED INto the permafrost of a remote Arctic mountain will next year house samples of the world's most important seeds, with the goal of providing mankind with a Noah's Ark of food in the event of global catastrophe.

The top-security repository in Svalbard archipelago near the North Pole, where construction began on Monday, will preserve some three million batches of seeds from all known varieties of the planet's crops.

This precious gene bank would make it possible to reestablish crops obliterated by major disasters, say the project's initiators.

"What we will store on Svalbard is not just one or two million seed samples and germ plasm, but the work of countless generations of farmers for thousands of years," Cary Fowler, executive secretary of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, told AFP.

Fowler said crop diversity was imperiled not just by a cataclysmic event, such as a nuclear war, but also by natural disasters, accidents, mismanagement, and short-sighted budget cuts.

Surrounded by permafrost and rock, the seed samples, such as wheat and potatoes, will be stored at a temperature of minus 18 degrees Celsius, which the trust hopes will ensure their survival for hundreds, maybe even thousands, of years.

Dubbed a "Noah's Ark" by the Norwegian government, the seed bank is expected to open in September 2007.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg took part in a groundbreaking ceremony at the site on Monday.

Stoltenberg symbolically placed a tube filled with seeds at the site, closely guarded by an armed police officer ready to fend off the polar bears that roam Svalbard, 1,000 km from the North Pole, and which are seen as a natural protection for the vault.

"The vault is of international importance. It will be the only one of its kind, all the other gene banks are of a commercial nature," he said in comments reported by Norwegian news agency NTB.

"It will be our last safety net. If the seeds stored in all the private gene banks are destroyed, which has happened about 40 times already, the contents of this vault will enable us to replace them," he said.

Norway financed the construction project, estimated at $3 million, and is charged with running the vault, but the seeds placed inside will remain the property of the country of origin.

In an interview with AFP, Fowler underlined the importance of preserving the world's plant life.

"At the end of the 1800s, 7,000 named apple varieties were grown in the United States. Now, 6,800 of those are as extinct as the dinosaurs," he said.

"Our crops are the oldest artifacts in the world, they are older than the pyramids, and they are alive," he said.

Buried 300 meters inside the mountain, the vault will be located behind an armor-plated door. A meter of reinforced concrete will fortify the chamber walls.

Arctic permafrost will act as a natural coolant to protect the samples which will be stored in watertight foil packages should a power failure disable refrigeration systems.

The thick walls, airlocks and doors mean that even if global warming accelerates badly, it would take many decades for hotter air to reach the seeds.

"It will ultimately house replicates of every known crop variety, as well as have ample capacity to accommodate new variation as it arises naturally," according to the Global Crop Diversity Trust.

Some of the 1,400 gene banks scattered around the world are in developing countries and could come under threats such as famine, natural and manmade disasters.

While the seed banks' status varies greatly, many are in dire straits, the Trust said, threatening the survival of some of the world's unique crop varieties.

AFP

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

N. Korea seeks talks to ease tensions

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA ON WEDNESDAY OFfered to hold talks with the United States on its missile launch plans, indicating it might put off a flight test that has raised tension and drawn sharp international warnings.

The number two diplomat at North Korea's UN mission was quoted saying the secretive state was open to talks with Washington, where there were reports that the US missile defense shield had been activated in case of a launch.

"The United States says it is concerned about our missile test launch," Han Song-ryol told South Korea's Yonhap news agency. "Our position is, 'Okay then, let's talk about it.'"

But he underlined the North's position that it had every right to develop, deploy and test-fire missiles.

"It is not right for others to tell us what to do about our sovereign rights," said Han, whose country last year announced it had developed an atomic bomb.

North Korea test-fired a missile over Japan into the Pacific Ocean in 1998, and reports that it was preparing another test have drawn warnings of a tough response from Japan and the United States.

Former South Korean president Kim Dae-jung, who made engagement with the estranged North a cornerstone of his policy while in office, cancelled a trip to Pyongyang next week.

"The trip is technically impossible right now because of the situation over the missile," said Jeong Sehyun, a former unification minister who was to accompany Kim.

A series of reports have said North Korea is preparing to test-fire a Taepodong-2 missile with a range of up to 6,700 km, far enough to hit targets in Alaska and possibly Hawaii.

Indications that the North had been fueling a missile—a process that experts say is dangerous and difficult to reverse—have caused concern. Japan and South Korea agreed their nations would have to cooperate to prevent a missile launch, the Japanese foreign ministry said in a statement.

"If the missile were to be launched, it would threaten the regional security. It is important that countries concerned would cooperate in urging North Korea to use its restraint," the ministry said.

Separately, South Korea warned it could scrap crucial food aid to its impoverished neighbor if the launch went ahead.

"South Korea could cut down or reject entirely the rice aid to North Korea, but we have not yet had detailed deliberations about this," unification ministry spokesperson Yang Chang-Seok said.

Citing US officials, the Washington Times newspaper meanwhile reported that a US missile defense system had been activated in the past two weeks.

Pentagon spokespersons refused to confirm or deny the report. But analysts said it was a virtual certainty that the defense system was working as a precaution—and as an opportunity to test it against a real missile launch.

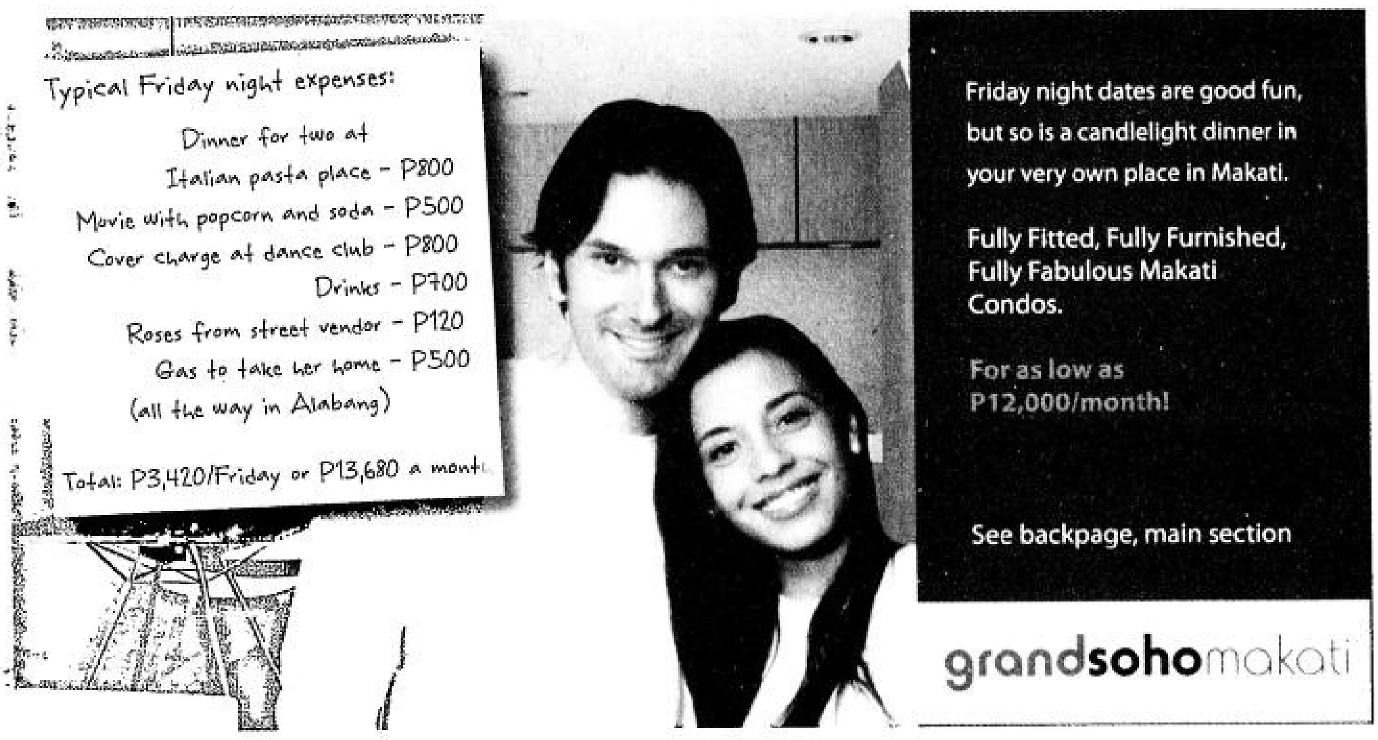
"This is the missile that the system is designed to shoot down," said John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.Org, a group that tracks military developments.

"If he did launch an attack on America and the missile defense system was on vacation that day, it wouldn't look good," he said.

The United States was keeping "all options on the table" to stop any launch, said the US ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer.

"We have greater technical means of tracking than in the past and we have options that we have not had in the past, and all those options are on the table," Schieffer said in Tokyo when asked if US forces would try to shoot down a missile.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said this week that any launch would be seen as "a very serious matter and indeed a provocative act." US President George W. Bush grouped North Korea with Iran and Saddam Hussein's Iraq as an "axis of evil" in 2002, and relations between the two sides have been layered with rhetoric and mistrust. *AFP*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Al-Qaida releases video of alleged 20th hijacker

WASHINGTON—AL-QAIDA HAS identified a would-be 20th hijacker for the Sept. 11 attacks as a Saudi operative who was killed in a 2004 shoot-out with his country's security forces.

In a statement accompanying a new video, the terrorist network's propaganda arm identified Fawaz al-Nashimi, also known as Turki bin Fuheid al-Muteiry, as the operative who would have rounded out a team that ultimately took over United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed into a Pennsylvania field before reaching its intended target.

A 54-minute video featuring al-Nashimi was obtained Tuesday by IntelCenter, a US government contractor based in Virginia. US counterterrorism officials declined to comment on the authenticity of the video and its claims.

The video included a screen crediting the al-Sahab media committee with producing the message. While no one is known to have forged the group's work, its statements are often difficult to verify.

The video includes footage of al-Nashimi justifying attacks against the West. It also contains 27 minutes of previously unheard audio of a siege that he took part in on oil facilities in Khobar, Saudi Arabia.

Screeching car tires gunfire are heard as the terror cell moved from building to building. A voice in Arabic can be heard saying: "Where are the Americans? ... Give me the information."

The demands are punctuated with more gunfire. *AP*

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SPORTS

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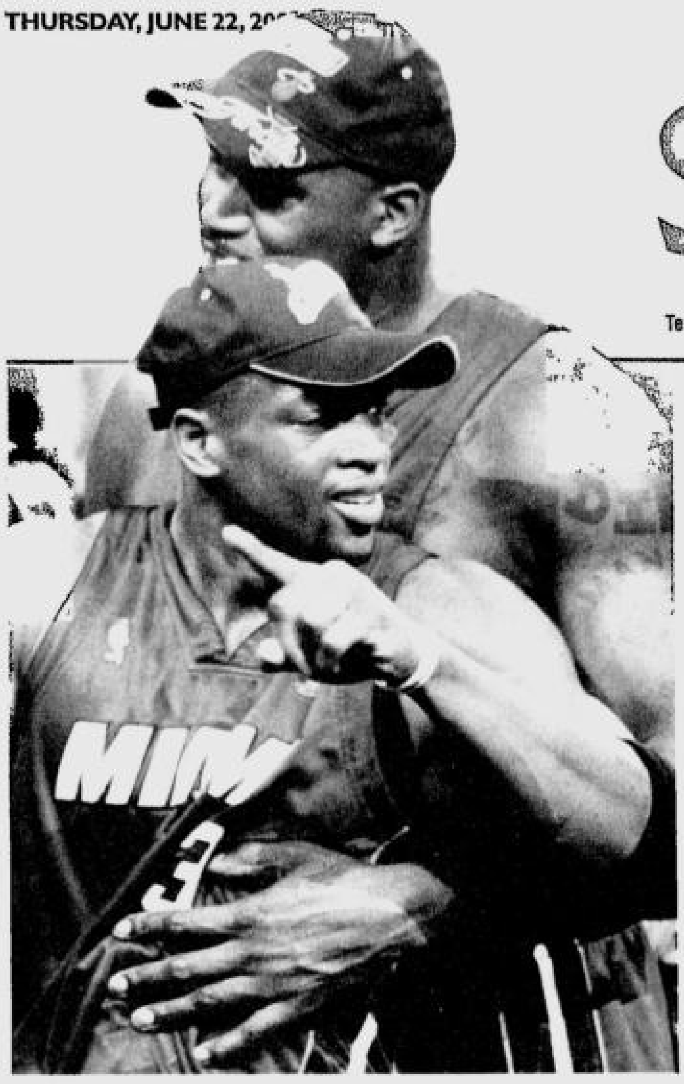


HEAT'S Shaquille O'Neal (rear) and Dwyane Wade hug after beating the Mavericks in Game 6 and clinching the NBA title. REUTERS

Heat wave hits NBA

DALLAS—THE LONG-SUFFERING MIAMI HEAT completed a remarkable turnaround by beating the Dallas Mavericks, 95-92, on Tuesday to win the NBA Finals, 4-2, and claim their first championship.

Finals MVP Dwyane Wade scored 36 points to lead the Heat, a team of veterans who recovered from a 0-2 deficit to sweep the next four games against a Dallas squad whose confidence evaporated further with each loss.

Udonis Haslem hit eight of 13 shots to add 17 points for the Heat, who won despite hitting just two of 18 from beyond the arc.

"We knew inside this team was built for the playoffs," Wade said of Miami's unremarkable 52-30 regular season record.

"That's what makes it sweet because not at one moment did one of us not believe in each other."

Dirk Nowitzki paced Dallas with 29 points and 15 rebounds but the Mavericks were doomed by shooting only 37 percent from the floor and hitting just five of 22 from three-point range.

A 17-foot jump shot by Josh Howard with 42 seconds left in the game pulled the Mavericks to within a point at 91-90, but Wade hit four straight free throws to push the Heat lead to 95-90 with 17.7 seconds remaining.

Two free throws by Howard trimmed the lead to 95-92 before two missed free throws by Wade with 10.3 seconds remaining gave Dallas its last ray of hope.

But a potentially game-tying 27-footer by guard Jason Terry misfired, giving the Heat their first title and igniting a midcourt celebration.

The championship was Pat Riley's fifth as a coach but first since 1988.

"I would have traded them all for this one," said a tearful Riley, whose previous titles came with the Los Angeles Lakers. "It's not disrespectful to any of them that I won.

"But after 18 years, and chasing, you keep chasing it, you keep chasing it, you get tired. So this gives me a sense of absolute freedom from having to chase it, desperately chase it."

The 18-year-old Heat franchise has often had outstanding records during the regular season but fallen flat in the postseason either due to poor play or running into title-bound teams like the Michael Jordan-led Chicago Bulls of the 1990s.

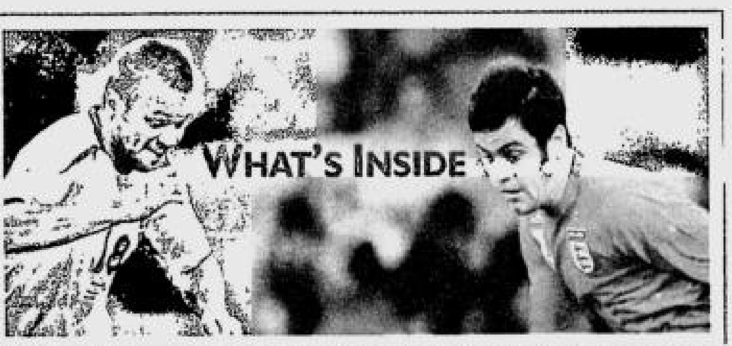
Dallas crushed Miami in the first two games of the Finals in Texas and it appeared the Heat were poised for a typical postseason collapse. But they caught fire and gained confidence in Miami, winning all three games inspired by the stellar play of Wade who averaged 40 points.

"I think what changed is everybody was counting us out," said Heat center Shaquille O'Neal, who scored nine points and had 12 rebounds in the series finale. "Certain people up here were planning parade routes.

"When we saw that—that they didn't give us the respect we deserved—we just wanted to take it one game at a time." *(More NBA on A26)*

Reuters

- Germany, England triumph /A24
- Adamson U gains playoff /A24
- Hard work for Pacquiao /A25
- Spring Oil, Tagaytay five take NBC semis openers /A26



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URBAN INSTITUTE OF REAL ESTATE

Beermen tie Bulls at 1-1

By June Navarro

SAN MIGUEL BEER CANNOT SURvive with Danny Seigle alone.

Dondon Hontiveros got out of a slump and helped Seigle fire up the Beermen to a 114-98 rout of Red Bull that tied their semifinal duel in the Gran Matador Brandy PBA Philippine Cup last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

After firing blanks in Game 1, Hontiveros knocked in all his six attempts from beyond the arc to pace the Beermen with a personal conference-high 26 points.

His perfect shooting from the three-point zone twice allowed the Cebuano hotshot to tie the all-time best performance in that area as far as accuracy is concerned. Hontiveros also went six for six in a game against Talk 'N Text last conference.

Vic Pablo of Talk 'N Text also achieved the feat in this conference to equal the feat of Glenn Capacio, who did the trick twice in the 1992 and 1996 seasons while playing for Purefoods.

"I wasn't aware of it," said Hontiveros after the Beermen tied the best-of-seven series at 1-1. "All I thought about was how to bounce back from Game 1."

Seigle, who bucked back spasms but still erupted for 35 points in Game 1, finished with 21 points and 10 rebounds while Dorian Peña strung up his 15th straight double-double performance in this conference with 17 points and 14 rebounds.

It was the 14th consecutive 20-point performance for Seigle, a game shy of replicating Alvin Patrimonio's 15 straight in 1992.

The return of Danny Ildefonso also boosted San Miguel's stock, especially in the shaded area where majority of the Beermen's points came from. San Miguel also canned 13 of 24 three-point shots.

Ildefonso, who sprained his left ankle in a tune-up game last week, had 14 points while Chris Calaguio added 11.

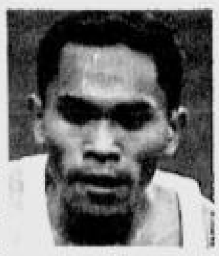
The scores:

SAN MIGUEL 114—Hontiveros 26, Seigle 21, Peña 17, Ildefonso 14, Calaguio 11, Gonzales 9, Adriano 8, Lopez 3, Cablay 2, Racela 2, Noble 1, Kong 0.

RED BULL 98—Najorda 21, Tugade 21, Baguio 14, Pennisi 10, Villanueva 7, Alvarez 6, Robinson 6, Cruz 6, Valenzuela 4, Hrabak 3.

Quarters: 36-26, 57-51, 89-72, 114-98.

Veterans stamp class



BUENAVISTA

PALAYAN CITY—veteran internationalists Eduardo Buenavista, Arnel Ferrera and Narcisa Atienza easily topped their respective events at the start yesterday of the 2006 Milo National Athletics Open at the newly inaugurated Nueva Ecija Sports Complex here.

Already seeded to the RP team for the Asian Games in Doha in December, Buenavista routed the field in the finals of the 5,000-meter run with a time of 14 minutes and 47.8 seconds.

His teammate in the Air Force squad, Julius Sermona, took the silver in 15:06.0, while Far Eastern's Abraham Barcaso Jr., placed third with a clocking of 15:31.2.

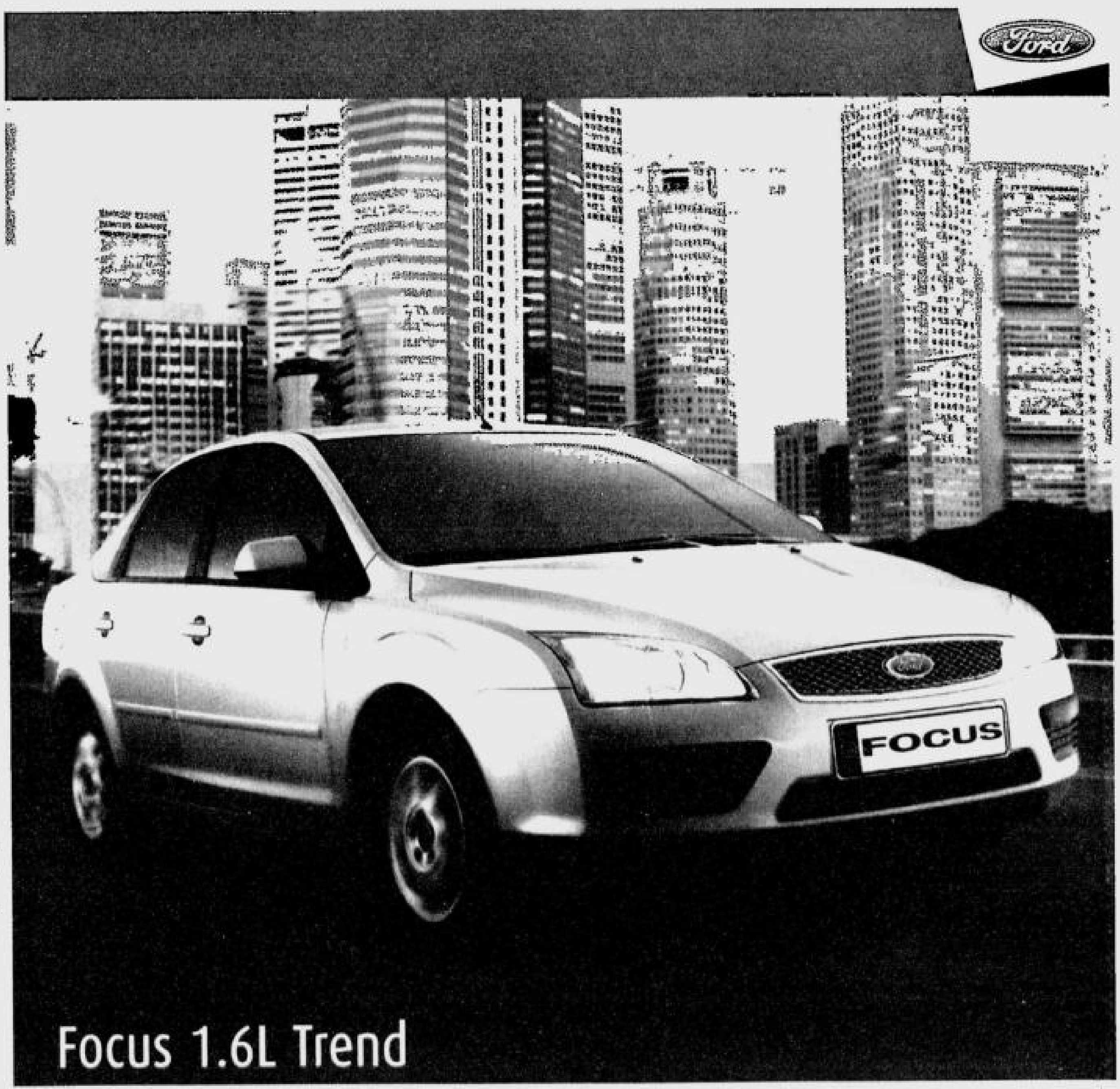
Ferrera, meanwhile, threw the hammer to a distance of 54.38 meters to underscore his tag as the best in Southeast Asia. Fellow Armymen Jerro Perater (48.71) and Agustin Jarina Jr. (36.55) finished second and third, respectively.

Atienza, on the other hand, cleared 1.80 meters for the high jump gold, outclassing Mariz Cotoner (1.50) and Jennifer Angeles (1.50).

The local government of Nueva Ecija, through Gov. Tomas Joson and the provincial board, poured in at least P4 million to accommodate over 1,000 athletes and officials from 40 teams including six foreign squads for the event that forms part of the Philippine Olympic Committee Festival.

Kuan Mei-Lien of Chinese-Taipei was the lone foreign bet to bag a medal after dominating the pole vault event for women with an effort of 3.70 meters.

Other first day winners were Raymund dela Cruz in the boys' 5000 meters (16:12.3); Bernadeth Mag-aso of Palawan in the girls' 3000 meters (10:40.3); and Lorna Zillabo in the girls' pole vault 2.05.



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GROUP A

Team®	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Germany	3	3	0	0	8	2	9
Ecuador	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Poland	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Costa Rica	3	0	0	3	3	9	0
GROUP B							
England	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Sweden	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Paraguay	3	1	0	2	2	2	3
Trin. & Tob.	3	0	1	2	0	4	1
GROUP C							
Argentina	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Netherlands	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Ivory Coast	2	0	0	2	2	4	0
Serb. & Mont.	2	0	0	2	0	7	0
GROUP D							
Portugal	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Mexico	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Angola	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Iran	2	0	0	2	1	5	0
GROUP E							
Italy	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Czech Republic	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Ghana	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
USA	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
GROUP F							
Brazil	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Australia	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Croatia	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Japan	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
GROUP G							
Switzerland	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Korea Republic	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
France	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Togo	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
GROUP H							
Spain	2	2	0	0	7	1	6
Ukraine	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Tunisia	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Saudi Arabia	2	0	1	1	2	6	1

INQGRAPHICS-LOUIE BACANI

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Germany 3, Ecuador 0; Poland 2, Costa Rica 1; England 2, Sweden 2 Paraguay 2, Trinidad & Tobago 1

TODAY'S MATCHES

Netherland vs Argentina; Ivory Coast vs Serbia and Montenegro; Portugal vs Mexico; Iran vs Angola

TEAM®
MP - Matches Played
W - Wins
D - Draws
L - Losses
GF - Goals For
GA - Goals Against
Pts - Points

BERLIN—GERMANY AND England may meet in this year's World Cup. Just not yet.

Germany cruised through as Group A winner Tuesday with a comfortable 3-0 victory over second-placed Ecuador and will face Sweden in the second round after the Scandinavians qualified with a 2-2 draw with England.

England finished top of Group B and plays Ecuador next.

Poland beat Costa Rica, 2-1, in Hanover in a game between two already eliminated teams, and Paraguay beat Trinidad and Tobago, 2-0. The Caribbean side had a slim chance of qualifying for the second round, but their hopes were hit by Brett Sancho's own-goal in the 25th minute and Nelson Cuevas' score in the 86th.

England, which has not beaten Sweden since 1968, led twice through Joe Cole's 30-meter shot and a header from substitute Steven Gerrard. Sweden fought back each time through Marcus Allback and veteran Henrik Larsson—the latter equalizing in the 90th.

England lost striker Michael Owen in the second minute with a knee injury and he may miss the rest of the competition.

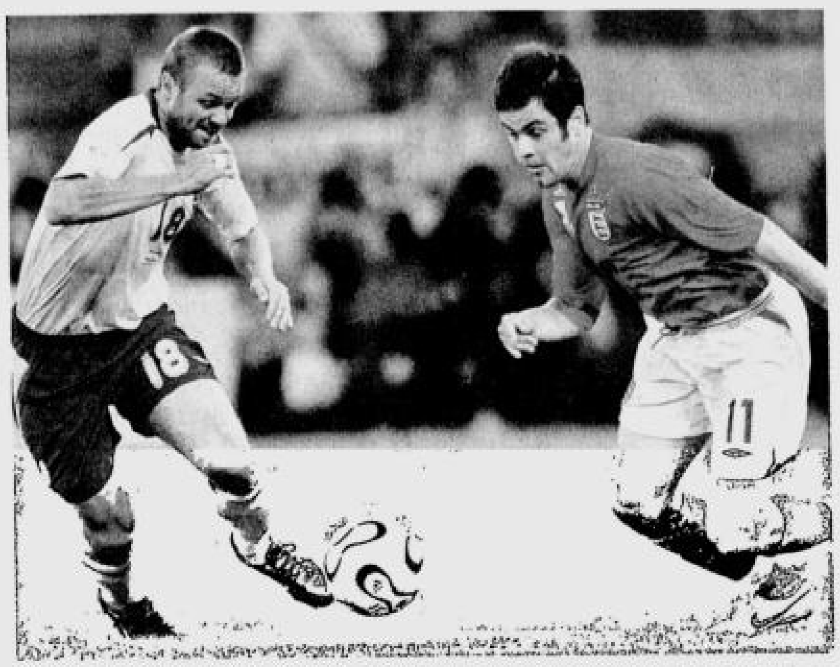
Germany will play Sweden in Munich on Saturday, while Ecuador will play England in Stuttgart on Sunday.

Berlin's Olympic Stadium was packed with a capacity crowd of 72,000, almost all of them in white shirts adorned with the national colors of red, black and yellow, and chanting, "Deutschland, Deutschland."

It was a memorable scene in a stadium where Jesse Owens won Olympic gold medals 70 years ago. The German team rarely plays in the Olympic Stadium—but has its sights on another trip to the historic arena, on July 9 in the World Cup final.

Miroslav Klose scored twice and Lukas Podolski scored the third. Klose also scored twice in the opening 4-2 victory over Costa Rica and is now the tournament's leading scorer with four goals.

"Our goal was to win the group and we achieved this," Germany coach Juergen Klinsmann said. "We are looking forward to the knockout stage. Our strikers are in really good shape, they are working hard and scoring. But it will be more difficult to score in later rounds, so they will have to work even harder."


SWEDISH forward Mattias Jonson (left) vies with English midfielder Joe Cole during their opening round Group B match. Cole eventually went on to score England's first goal. AFP

In Cologne, police were on the highest alert for England's game against Sweden. Tens of thousands of fans descended on the city, but the mood was party-like in the hours leading up to the evening kickoff.

Klose got Germany off to the best of starts when he finished strong German pressure in the fourth minute. Defender Per Mertesacker flicked the ball over to the far post and Bastian Schweinsteiger crossed it back onto the path of Klose, who drove it inside the far post.

A minute before halftime, captain Michael Ballack produced a moment of magic, insolently flicking the ball over the Ecuador defense to Klose, who shook off two defenders while playing the ball off his thigh, went around Mora and scored.

In the 57th minute, Robert Huth blocked a shot outside the German penalty area, and Schweinsteiger carried the ball forward before timing his pass to Bernd Schneider perfectly. Schneider curled a cross into the box to the galloping Podolski, who prodded the ball in inside the right post.

In Cologne, Cole's 34th minute volley came as England was in almost complete control despite Owen's injury. Coach Sven-Goran Eriksson, asked if Owen was out for the tournament, said, "maybe, we don't know yet, but it doesn't look good."

Marcus Allback's 51st minute header from a corner leveled the scores. Sweden then hit the crossbar twice before Gerrard headed in Cole's cross in the 85th.

As England fans celebrated, a long Swedish throw in was missed by the English defense and Larsson scored to equalize.

In Kaiserslautern, Trinidad and Tobago never recovered from its own goal in a game it needed to win to have any chance at advancing to the second round.

After starting its first World Cup with a surprising 0-0 draw against Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago finished last in the group with only that one point. *AP*

FIFA WORLD CUP ON SPORTPLUS
12 a.m.—Ecuador vs Germany
1 p.m.—Sweden vs England
4 p.m.—Paraguay vs Trinidad & Tobago
10 p.m.—Ghana vs USA (replay tomorrow @ 1 p.m.)

Adamson U gains playoff

ADAMSON ONCE AGAIN GOT the big numbers from the Big Girl.

Cherry Rose Macatangay unleashed 34 points that included 28 kills to power Adamson to a 20-25, 27-25, 25-23, 25-23 victory over San Sebastian yesterday and clinch a playoff for the last finals berth in the Shakey's V-League at the Blue Eagle Gym.

The power-hitting 5-foot-11 Macatangay found no worthy opposition from San Sebastian's side as she hit from all corners after the Lady Falcons suffered a first-set jolt en route to their ninth win in 13 games for second place.

The win also denied the Lady Stags a chance to make the rubber-match as they are still one victory short of the 5-of-8 semis incentive. With an 8-6 record, they need to beat Far Eastern on Saturday for that playoff with the Lady Falcons.

Earlier, Lyceum bested La Salle, 25-18, 21-25, 18-25, 25-17, 18-16. The Lady Archers, safely in the finals, didn't use Thai import Jindarat Kanchana.

Marc Anthony Reyes

Red Lions stun Tams, bag title

SAN BEDA NIPPED FAR EASTERN, 90-88, last night to capture the first Philippine Olympic Festival basketball crown at the Tinga Stadium in Taguig City yesterday. Alex Angeles fired 14 points, including the marginal basket that capped the Red Lions' stunning victory over the Tams, who swept the elims and came into the finals heavily favored. Yousif Aljamal scored 20 points while three others made double-digit scores for the Red Lions. Nigerian Samuel Ekwe came through with 17 points, while John Paul Escobal and Riego Gamalinda tossed in 12 and 10, respectively, for the Mendiola-based cagers. Earlier, Philippine Christial U fought back from a 16-point deficit to beat National U, 73-69, and clinch the bronze medal. Jason Castro fired 24 points for the Dolphins.

Arevalo paces Little People's golf tourney

QUINCY, ILLINOIS—THE Philippines' Abby Arevalo fired an eagle-spiked three-under-par 31 Tuesday afternoon to grab a three-shot lead over a Puerto Rican in the Pepsi Little People's golf championship at the well-manicured K of C layout here.

The second-grader from Southville International in Las Piñas also had five birdies against three bogeys to pace the 6-7 year class, a division which drew more than 150 players out of the total of close to 1,000 from all over the globe seeing action in several divisions.

Diana Camilla Velez of Puerto Rico turned in a 34 for second place heading into the final day Wednesday even as Claire Hodges, who nipped Abby for the Class F trophy of the Junior World at Colina Park in San Diego last year, stood five shots off after a 36.

The 7-year-old Abby also teamed up with dad and caddy Tony to win the Parent and Child alternate shot tournament Monday at the nearby River Valley course with a 9-over 45.

Tony first caddied in the morning for Mark Anthony, Abby's older brother, who was tied for third along with former winner AR Ramos in the 9-10 division with 3-over-par 39s.

American Martin Joshua assembled a 34 for a three-shot lead over Davis Ben, another American, who fired a 37.

Another Filipina, Felicia Medalla, was third in the 8-9 bracket at Indian Trails after a 37. Mexican Maria Jose submitted a level 34 for first while Kim Pak of Thailand was second, just one shot behind.

Most of those in the field are using this tournament to prime up for the Junior World, set in several courses in San Diego, early next month.

After that heart-rending runner-up finish at Colina Park, Abby has spent most of the past year training under Tony for the San Diego tournament. She will play in the higher Class E division this year.

Highlands Ladies Cup set July 15

THE SISTERS OF MARY BOYS and Girls Town in Silang, Cavite will be the prime beneficiary of the First Highlands Ladies Cup, a fund-raising tournament slated on Saturday at the Tagaytay Midlands golf course.

Format of play is Stableford with four categories—Classes A, B and C for men and ladies division to be disputed. The event is open to all men and women, members and non-members.

HSBC, the world's largest bank, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum and San Miguel Corp. are the major sponsors. INQUIRER Golf, Antonio's Restaurant, Rosalie Heo, Celerity Healthy Quencher, Metrobaker (Dunkin Donuts), Welch, PBCom, Guess Jeans, Fly Ace Corp. Wines, Sunbolt sports drink, Chocolate Kiss, Bizu, Makati Golf Club, Boysen Paints and Burlington Socks are the other sponsors.

More sponsors are expected to support the launching project of the Tagaytay ladies.

For hole-in-one prizes on designated holes, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Inc. is putting up a Grandis, Club Car is staking a golf cart, Baron Travel a four-night cruise in Baja, Mexico, Philippine Airlines is donating tickets for two to Los Angeles and Vietnam and Regent Travel Travel three-days-two-nights vacation package for two at El Nido in Palawan including airfare.

A ticket worth P3,000 is inclusive of green fees, golf cart, lunch, raffle and giveaways. For inquiries, call Dolly or Maybelle at 536-2558 or 522-7189, fax 521-8848 or 09175392904.

SPORTSWATCH

PLM–Maragtas golf June 28

THE 1st PAMANTASAN NG LUNGSOD NG MAYNILA- MARAGTAS GOLF TOURnament takes place on June 28 at the Intramuros Golf Club to raise funds for the scholarship program of Maragtas, a group of PLM ROTC/WATC alumni. "We have been supporting some cadet officers with educational assistance but this time, we would like to provide them with college scholarships and stipends," said Nat Marquez, project director and Maragtas adjutant-general of the event, co-organized by the Alternative Events Group Inc. . Entry fee is P2500 inclusive of green fee, caddy's fee and lunch. For inquiries, contact Nat Marquez, 0918–9093700 and Nino Sinco, 0927–5303231.

Ho forges final duel vs Olivarez

THIRD SEED JASMINE TAN HO, EYEING HER FOURTH STRAIGHT TITLE THIS year, ousted Patricia Orteza, 6-1, 6-3, last Sunday to reach the girls' 12-under final in the 7th Copa de Manila Age Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Tan Ho, a Grade 5 student at the Immaculate Conception Academy in San Juan, used a variety of shots to beat the second-seeded Orteza and arrange a title showdown with top seed Shannin Mae Olivarez, who scored a 6-3, 6-2 win over fourth seed Tamitha Nguyen. "I expect a tough match in the final but I will do my best to win," said the 11-year-old Tan Ho, winner of Toby's, Manila Polo Club-Dunlop and Head Penn Manila leg early this year. In other results, top seed Bambi Zoleta blasted No. 7 JV Custodio, 6-0, 6-0, to reach the girls' 16-under finals.

Mild Seven Renault eyes Canadian GP

LOCAL F1 FANS CAN WATCH MILD SEVEN RENAULT DRIVERS FERNANDO Alonso and Giancarlo Fisichella this weekend as the Mild Seven F1 Club will be holding a viewing party of the Canadian GP on Sunday at Aruba Bar in Metrowalk, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. It is open to all race enthusiasts 18 years old and above. The trivia contest will start at 10:30 p.m. with original team merchandise as prizes. Live screening of the race starts at midnight.

Las Piñas cockfest: 100 fights today

MORE THAN 100 FIGHTS WILL SPICE UP THE BATTLE OF METRO MANILA cockers at Las Piñas Coliseum via the Fastest Win -One Cock Ulutan beginning at 8 a.m. today. Fights will be extended until midnight to accommodate the big number of entries, according to host Preco Reyes of Laguna. A fastest win champion will be selected every fight based on the registered winning time and shall receive P4,000. The second placer gets a mountain bike. The overall fastest win champion gets P8,000; second, P4,000 and third, P2,000. Meanwhile, the special 2-cock derby of Arnel Tenedero unwraps on June 29. Entry fee is P3,300. Call 873 -1040 and 874-3910.

Pacquiao targets Cocker of the Year

BOXING ICON MANNY PACQUIAO AIMS FOR THE COVETED COCKER OF the year title when the PCAP Championship 8-cock derby fires off at Makati Coliseum on June 26 and 28 with B-Meg Derby Ace as sponsor. Pacquiao and his partner Amor Salvanera lead the PCAP Cocker of the Year race and may eventually clinch the title next week. Last June 1, Pacquiao's Super Pacman entry emerged solo champion in the NCA International 8-cock derby at Roligon. Team Pacquiao is also preparing for the Salpukan Sa Taglugon 5-cock derby on July July 10, 12, 15, 17, 19 and 22 at Makati Coliseum. Call 896-3545 and 895-6475 (Joan or Stephanie).

Tenorio leads early list of PBA Draft applicants

By Jasmine W. Payo

CRACK POINT GUARD LA TENORIO, JUST days after capping a brilliant amateur career with a Philippine Basketball League championship for Harbour Centre and a Finals MVP award, yesterday submitted his application for the 2006 PBA Rookie Draft.

Tagged as the most skilled point guard in the coming draft, the 21-year-old Tenorio is fancied to be picked high in the annual selection scheduled Aug. 20 at the Market, Market in Taguig.

"I'm not expecting to be among the top five (picks) as long as I join a good team and I can fit in their system," said Tenorio.

Far Eastern forward Mark Isip, who played a key role in the Tamaraws' 2005 UAAP championship run, also submitted his application last Monday.

Behind the leadership of Tenorio, sixth-ranked Harbour Centre recently became the lowest-seeded team ever to win a championship in the PBL and his individual effort was rewarded with the Unity Cup Finals MVP award.

The 5-foot-8 Tenorio first broke into national prominence playing for the San Beda Red Cubs in the high school NCAA before blossoming into a full-pledged collegiate star with Ateneo in the UAAP where he helped the Eagles win the 2002 title.

Isip also had an excellent stint in the PBL, where he teamed up with Arwind Santos and Kelly Williams to lead Magnolia Ice Cream to the 2005 Heroes Cup title.

Williams, incidentally, also submitted his application together with fellow Fil-Ams Joe Devance and Rob Reyes but were still to be declared completely eligible for the Draft pending the submission of pertinent documents.

30th Milo Marathon resumes in Cavite

CHUA

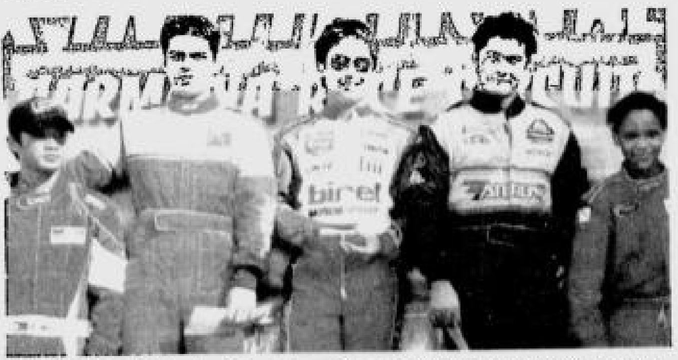
THE 30TH NATIONAL MILO Marathon, the country's biggest and longest running annual foot race, hits the road anew in Cavite City on Sunday for the seventh leg of the 2006 season. While the centerpiece race is the 21K elimination run, the race expected to draw the bigger number of participants are the 5K fun run for high school and college students and the age-group 3K race for children 6 to 12 years old.

Races begin at 6 a.m. in front of the new public market.

National Milo Marathon race organizer Rudy Biscocho is advising all participants to be at the check-in area at least one hour before the start of the race for the pre-race briefing.

Also in store for students during the event held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas, Cebu Pacific, Department of Tourism and Powerbar are the inter-school cheering competition and the contest for biggest delegation.

Organizing the Cavite City elimination run is the City Government of Cavite with Vice Mayor Dino Chua heading the organizing committee.


ROTAX RACE: Marlon Stockinger (center) tops Round 1 of the 2006 Rotax Invitational Challenge held June 17 at the Carmona Circuit Phils. in Cavite. From left: Stefano Marcelo, fourth; Ivan Carapiet, second; Stockinger, Daniel Cleak, third; Alessandra Madrigal, fifth.

Hard work for Pacquiao

By Marc Anthony Reyes

HE STAYED UP LATE TO ATTEND the premiere showing of the movie about his life. And he complained of too much distractions inside the gym.

These things obviously bothered Manny Pacquiao during his first sparring session in the country yesterday and the visibly irked champ refused to hide his disappointment.

"Jet lag," was all Pacquiao said in response to queries by the media about his so-so sparring performance against Russian lightweight Rustam Nugaev.

Trainer Freddie Roach articulated it better, saying that the champ was forced to stay late during the movie screening of the "Manny Pacquiao Story" which started two hours behind schedule at 9 p.m.

"We got back to the hotel (Manila Hotel) close to midnight and Manny had to wake up early this morning for the roadwork," said Roach. "But Manny still looked good when he wanted to, though you could see him struggling a bit because he is a little tired."

Pacquiao, who will put his career on the line against Mexican Oscar Larios on July 2 at the Araneta Coliseum, pushed through with his jogging routine at the Roxas Blvd. early yesterday morning.

From there he continued his usual training regimen capped by the six-round sparring at the Abap gym inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex with the Russian, who arrived with him from the United States Tuesday.

"From now on, no more movies, no more appearances and hopefully no more distractions," said Roach. "But you'll never know with Manny Pacquiao."

"Wild Card rules will be enforced tomorrow (today)," said Rob Peters, Pacquiao's chief security at the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood.

Larios is set to plane in from Japan on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao is expected to spend millions from his fight purse just to accommodate friends, freeloaders, and fans who want to get a piece of the July 2 action. Among those who have called up Pacquiao to ask for free tickets are politicians, billiards and cockfighting buddies and relatives of close associates. *With a report from Salven Lagumbay*

Alcano competing in US pool circuit

RONATO ALCANO, WHO CONTRIBUTED two billiards gold medals in the country's overall championship romp in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, left Tuesday to compete again in several billiards tilts in the US.

"I hope to perform well in the US pool circuit again," said Alcano, a 33-year-old hotshot from Calamba, Laguna, who earned piece of billiards history in 2002 when he was named top rookie by Azbilliards.com, the leading billiards website in the United States.

Alcano, winner of the 15-ball rotation singles and the rotation doubles with Leonardo Andam in the SEAG, tries to pick up from where Dennis Orcollo and Gandy Valle left off. Orcollo and Valle, who like Andam is being supported by businessman Perry Mariano of Busy Lairs billiard hall, also performed creditably in earlier stints in the US circuit.

Alcano failed to qualify in the IPT Tour last June 16-18 at the Broadway Pool Club in Shanghai, China. *Marlon Bernardino*

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More recently, the LaserComb was the focus of a year long study sponsored by Dateline NBC. The Dateline story tracked the success and failures of five men using five different popular hair loss products. Their progress was monitored by Dr. Paolo Romanelli, a professor with the University of Miami's Dermatology Department. Dr. Romanelli had this to say about the participant (his name is George) who used the LaserComb: "I think he had some substantial results. I think the results were very encouraging and overall this participant had good results." He added, "I definitely saw some new hair on the top of his head." For his part, George was "thrilled" with his results, and he even mentioned that he had a friend who also used the LaserComb with very impressive results. In addition to all this, the LaserComb has been the focus of positive news coverage from ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC stations around the United States. The LaserComb has also been the subject of many news articles including coverage in newspapers like the Wall Street Journal. Even "Ripley's Believe It or Not" rated the LaserComb as a "Believe It" product.

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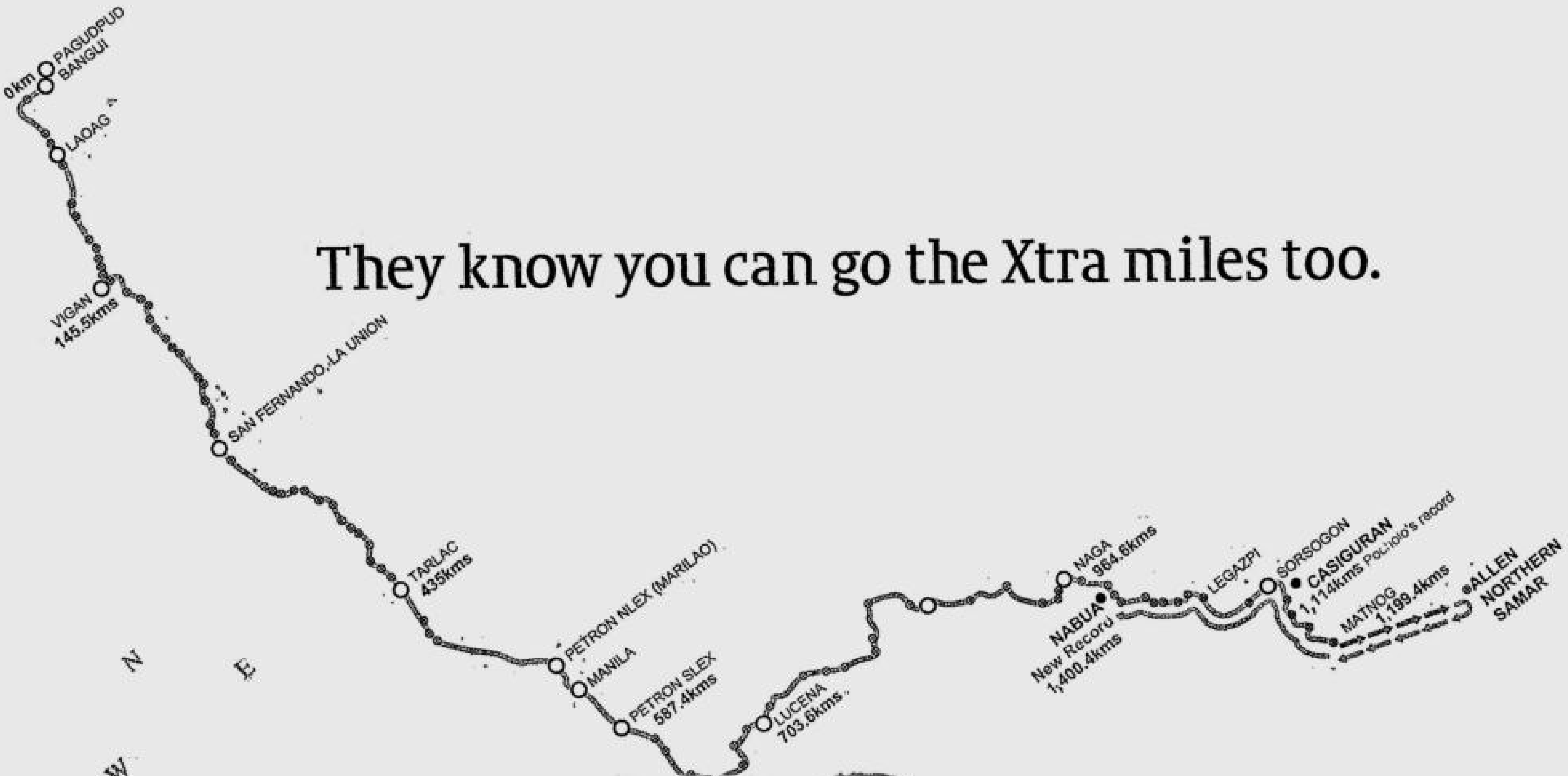

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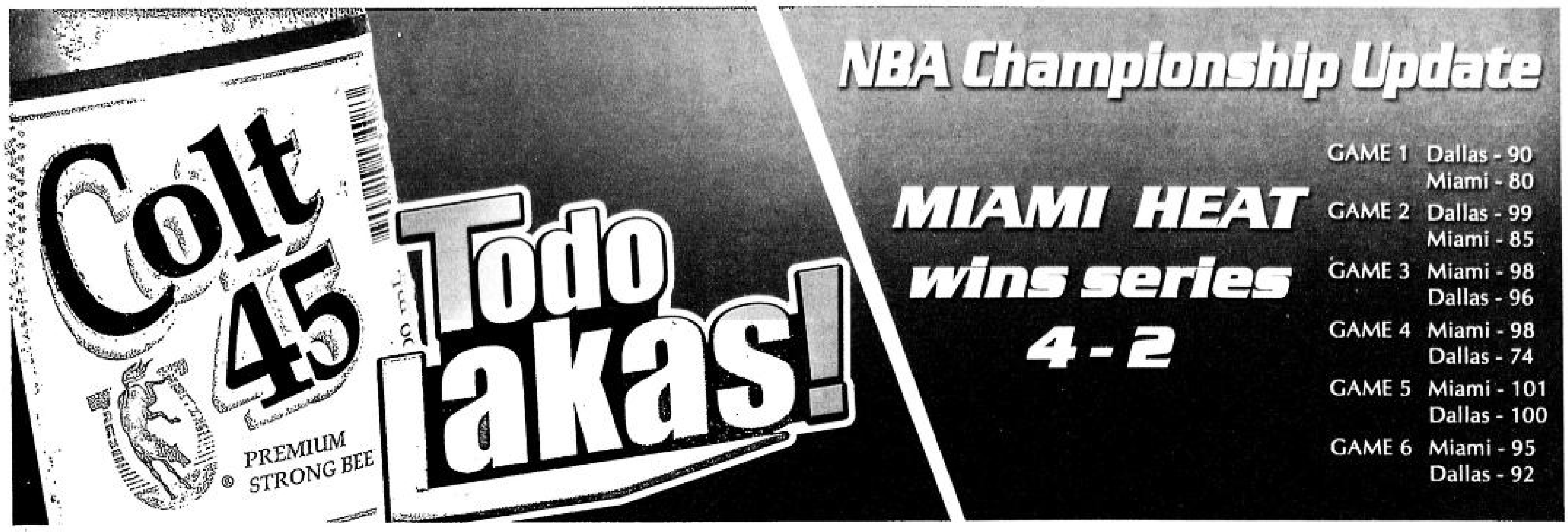
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GAME 3 Miami - 98 Dallas - 96
GAME 4 Miami - 98 Dallas - 74
GAME 5 Miami - 101 Dallas - 100
GAME 6 Miami - 95 Dallas - 92

This Wade's no flash in the pan

DWYANE Wade leaves no question who the Finals MVP is. AP

Dwyane validates Heat faith

DALLAS—DWYANE WADE GRABBED THE season's last rebound, throwing the ball high in the air as the clock ran out.

And with that, he let out a long scream, a shout of delight—it was over. He and the Miami Heat were world champions.

"Man, it's one of the best feelings, next to my wife and my son, that I've ever had in my whole life," Wade said.

With a 36-point night, Wade led the Heat to a 95-92 win over the Dallas Mavericks in Game 6 of his first title series. The Heat lost the first two games, then won the next four, riding Wade, nicknamed "The Flash," every step of the way.

"This team was built for this. This team was built for the playoffs," Wade said. "Not at one moment did one of us not believe in each other."

Shaquille O'Neal grabbed and hugged him. Heat owner Micky Arison wrapped his arms around him. And Wade simply raised one finger high.

He was the finals Most Valuable Player, the best player in the playoffs, on the NBA's best team.

"Wade is the best player ever," O'Neal said before the trophy ceremony.

Let the comparisons to you-know-who continue.

"Dwyane has told me that he would not like me to speak of him in context with Michael Jordan anymore, out of respect of him," coach Pat Riley said Tuesday, about eight hours before tipoff. "He's a pretty good player himself."

There are obvious parallels—like how both Jordan and Wade can make taking over a game look effortless.

At one point, he had three Dallas defenders around him and the two others watching as he dribbled on the right wing. No one—except Wade, that is—noticed James Posey standing alone in the corner.

Just like an MVP would, Wade tossed him the ball, and Posey hit a 3-pointer.

"This is a team award," Wade said as he was handed the MVP trophy, "like it's a team championship."

In his 98th game of a grueling, trying season where the Heat switched personnel, switched coaches and were perceived as not good enough to win it all there was enough spring in his step to deliver 10 rebounds, five assists, four steals and three blocks.

His game is complete. So, too, is his resume.

Moments before tipoff, amid deafening noise, Wade stood alone in front of the Heat bench, stretching. O'Neal leaned in for a word, and Wade nodded approval to whatever Shaq whispered.

"I knew the first time I saw him, he was something special," O'Neal said.

O'Neal always refers to Wade as "my favorite pupil." School's out for summer now, though.

Wade just graduated.

At 24, he's atop the basketball world.

"That's what these events do," Riley said. "They make genuine stars out of some players." *AP*

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LED BY Pat Riley and a host of players who wanted it all, the Miami Heat finally found their moment to shine. AFP

Novaliches, Cainta rule nat'l duckpin

THE NOVALICHES SATURDAY BOWLers Association (NSBA) W Lily 1 and Cainta Duckpin Bowling Association (CADBA) shared top honors in the recent 32nd National Invitational Open duckpin bowling championships at the Oasis Bowling Center in San Fernando, La Union.

NSBA toppled MONLU I and NSBA W Lily III in the stepladder finals to capture the men's team title. CADBA walked over the Association of Duckpin Bowling of Baguio Benguet (ADBBB) to win the women's team crown.

The Inner Circle Duckpin Bowling Association squad finished third.

More than 900 bowlers competed in the third leg of the PHIDBC (Philippine Duckpin Bowling Council) series supported by the Philippine Olympic Committee, Smart Communications, Advance Paper, Monami Writing instruments and 105.1 FM Crossover.

Spring Oil, Tagaytay five take NBC semis openers

SPRING COOKING OIL-PARAÑAQUE AND Batang Tagaytay bested their rivals Tuesday at the start of the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship's separate northern division best-of-three semifinal series.

NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla's Cooking Oil Masters limited Pangasinan Hundred Islands to nine points in the final quarter for a 77-74 victory at the Urdaneta Sports Center in Pangasinan while Mayor Bambol Tolentino's Tagaytay cagers subdued Bacchus/Harbour Centre-Manila, 64-61, at the Lyceum gym.

Ex-collegian Aldrin Morante sparkled for Spring Oil-Parañaque, which was reinforced by PBL veterans Marvin Ortiguerra and Larry Rodriguez.

The Cooking Oil Masters, the top northern team in the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel, try to wrap up the series against Pangasinan at 7 p.m. at the Lyceum gym.

Joel Finuliar and Niño Marquez saved the day for Tagaytay by drilling back-to-back treys. Those shots deflated the Manileños of businessman Mikee Romero and coach Lawrence Chongson.

The scores:

SPRING 77—Morante 13, Capobres 12, Manuel 11, Epondulan 8, Yambao 6, Ortiguerra 5, Rodriguez 5, Reyes 2.

PANGASINAN 74—Aquino 16, Lopez 13, Ruiz 10, Bognot 8, Balares 8, Araman 4, Tiongson 4, Yambao 4, Menor 4, Tolentino 3.

Quarters: 24-26, 44-42, 60-65, 77-74.

TAGAYTAY 64—Finuliar 14, Robillos 12, Mallari 10, Marquez 8, Gulyab 8, Genido 8, Reyes 2, Caceres 2.

BACCHUS 64—Membrere 13, Buenafe 12, Sta. Curz 11, Hardin 8, Retaga 5, Coyukang 5, Aquino 5, Masbang 2.

Quarters: 14-16, 30-31, 44-43, 64-61.

Archer Yap debuts with aplomb

OLONGAPO CITY—NEWCOMER EMILY MAE Yap of Cebu upset Athens Olympian Jasmin Figueroa of Cagayan de Oro in the women's recurve individual qualifying round of the 2006 national target championship yesterday at the Subic bay Freeport Football field here.

The 20-year-old Yap had 1287 points after shooting 306, 330, 317 and 334 in the 70-, 60-, 50- and 30-meter distances to finish 40 points ahead of Figueroa, who had 1247 in the event highlighting the Philippine Olympic Festival.

Joann Tabanag scored 1348 points (315, 342, 338 and 353) to nip Sydney Olympian Jennifer Chan (1338) in the adult bow compound division.

The other leading qualifiers in the event sponsored by SBMA, Coca-cola, Globe and AMA Computer University (Olongapo City) were Leina Mae Bolinas (junior), Lourdes Mae Bellone (Makiling), Ana Mariel Inton (Cadet) and Jamaila Mikhail Inductivo (Novice).

ENTERTAINMEN
Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**
sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/ci (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Music is soul food—Echo

He says he's not scared of leaving 'Panday' behind to strike out on his own and become … a singer

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

JERICHO Rosales

JERICHO ROSALES IS IN A fighting stance—like the real-life character he is portraying in "Pacquiao the Movie."

After eight years as a *Kapamilya*, an ABS-CBN contract star (his contract with Star Magic, ABS-CBN's talent center, expired on April 24), Echo is striking out on his own.

His movie and TV assignments are now being handled by nephew Ryan Manalo, vice president of Silver Moon, the "small company" Echo has put up. His music projects are under Manila Genesis.

With his band Jeans, he just signed up with EMI, which is releasing his debut CD "Loose Fit" in six Asian territories, including Indonesia, where his old soap opera "Pangako sa 'Yo," was a hit.

"I'm not scared because this is what I want—music is soul food for me," he told INQUIRER Entertainment (we first broke the story on June 15.) "I want to rest from acting, maybe for three to four months, and concentrate on music."

Taking control

He's excited, he said. "I want to take control of my life."

Echo, who has been a renewed Christian since 2000, proudly talks of his production house's first baby, the music video of the song 'Coming Out,' which he also directed.

"We have big dreams for Silver Moon," he said. "We also want to produce digital movies."

Composer Ryan Cayabyab, with whom he worked in ABS-CBN's 50th anniversary special three years ago, described Echo as "a singer with a lot of energy." Cayabyab added, "He may be no Basil Valdez, but I liked his singing voice."

Echo's new manager, Angeli Pangilinan, said her husband Gary Valenciano was also impressed with Jericho's musicality, describing him as "a

MUSIC/ A2-2

Snooky fired from 'Barbell'

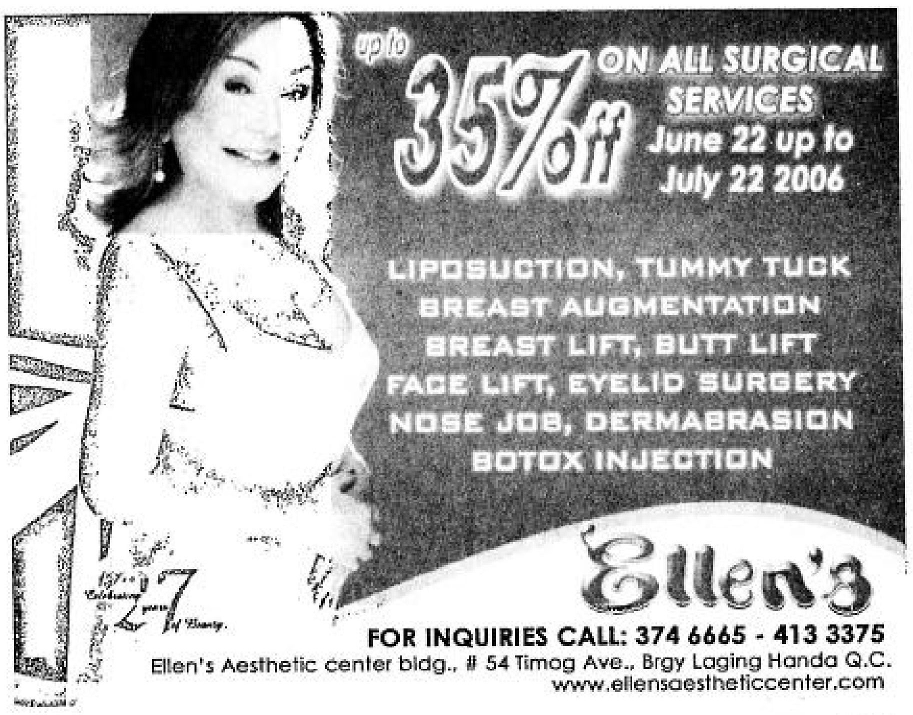
By Nini Valera

SNOOKY Serna

FORMER CHILD STAR SNOOKY SERNA WAS dropped from the cast of the fantaserye "Captain Barbell" for being habitually late.

Snooky, 40, briefly played the role of Barbara, mother of the super-hero played by Richard Gutier-

SNOOKY/ A2-5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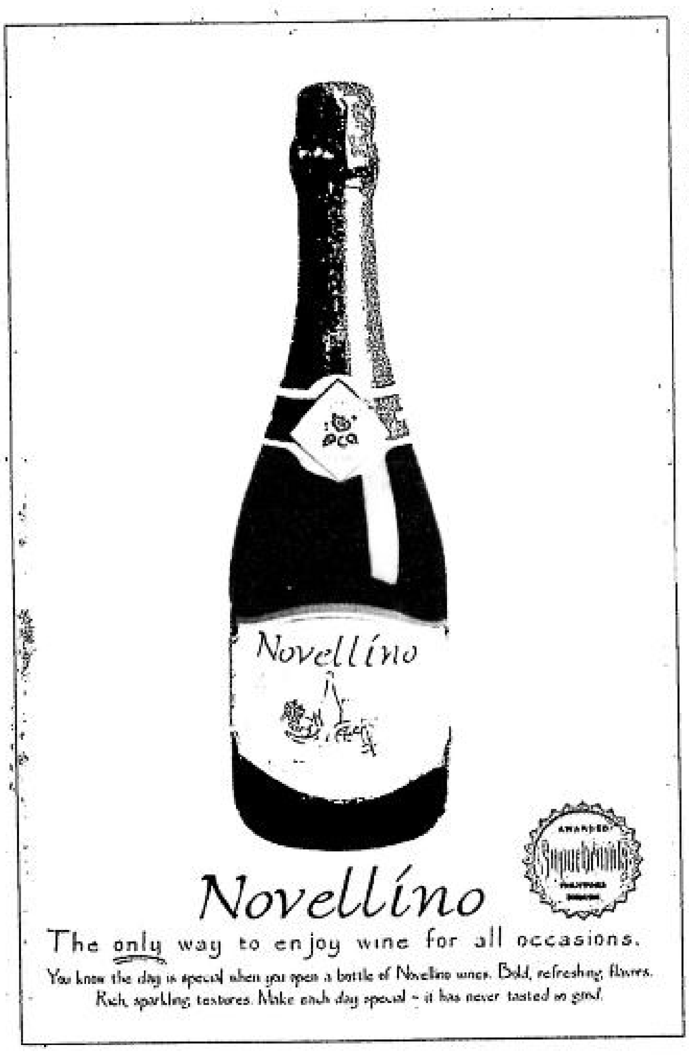
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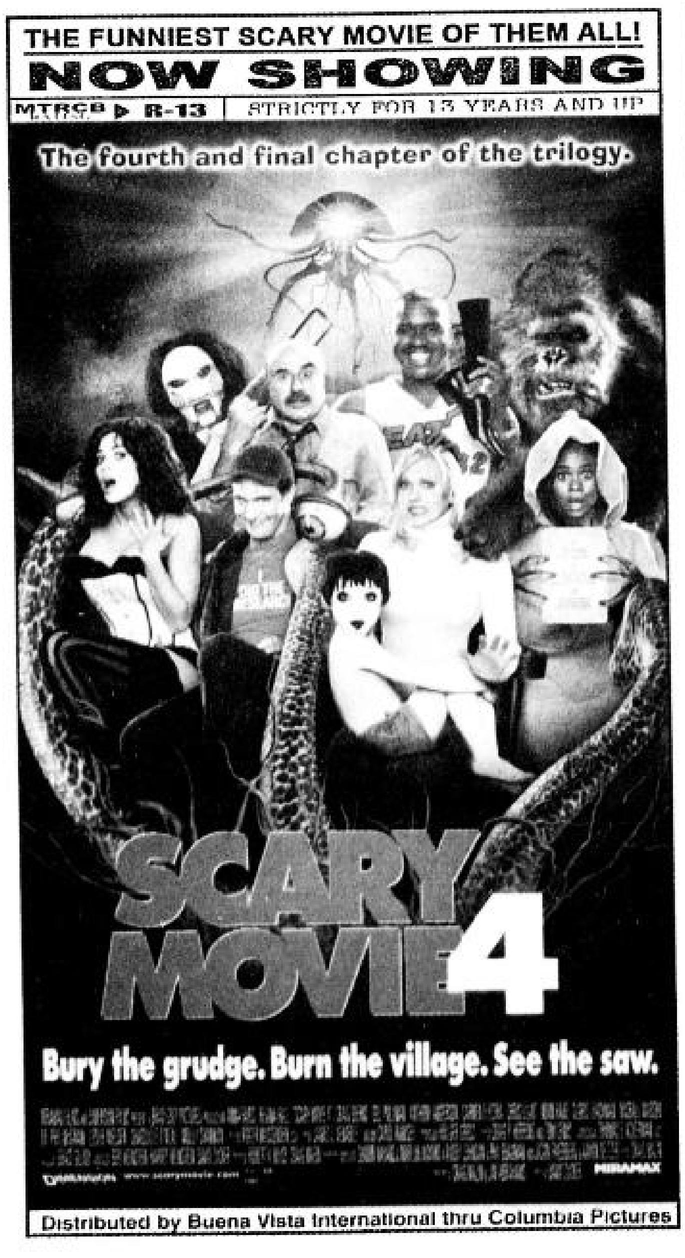
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See flyers for details. Per DTI -NCR Permit no. 3257 Series of 2006

Music is what I want—Echo

From page A2-1

very deep songwriter."

Echo wrote two songs in the album, one of them entitled "You're So Beautiful," dedicated to girlfriend Heart Evangelista.

"No explanations necessary," he said. "We have a duet version of the song."

Package deal?

Since they seem joined at the hip, rumor has it that the sweethearts have become a "package deal," especially since Heart had also left Star Magic for Genesis.

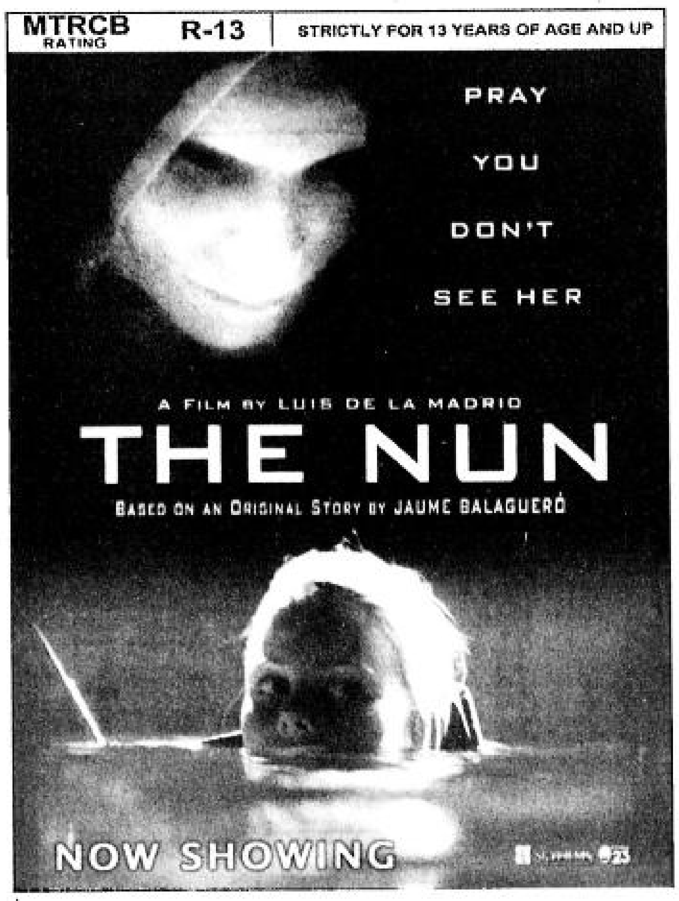
Echo denied this. "I love working with her," he said. "But we're not a package deal."

He also denied that it was Heart who dragged him to Genesis and that they were pirated by the management company. "No manager would do that to another manager."

He said he's certain that his former colleagues in Star Magic will not take his decision against him. "They are professionals," he said. He pointed out that "Pacquiao the Movie," a co-production of Star Cinema and FLT Films, is still under Star Magic.

Speaking of Manny, Echo said that, apart from drive, he shares love of music with the boxing champ.

"Manny is a multi-media star," Echo said. "His music may not be heavy-duty, but it's fun and the masses love it."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Cinema	Movie	Times	Rating
1	THE NUN	12:10, 2:20, 4:30, 6:40, 8:50	R13
2	CARS	11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	GP

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Cinema	Movie	Times	Rating
3	FAST & THE FURIOUS	11:30, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50	PG13
4	THE LAKE HOUSE	10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00	PG13
5	SCARY MOVIE	10:40, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00	R13

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MUSIC MUSEUM	JUNE 23,24&30,2006	NINA ... in VERY MANILOW	9:00PM
	JULY 8,2006	GLADYS GUEVARA	9:00PM
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GARFIELD 2 G 1:00,3:00,5:00 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING - PG13 7:10,9:20	SCARY MOVIE 4 R13 1:30,3:30,5:30,7:30,9:30	THE LAKE HOUSE PG13 1:20,3:30,5:40,7:50,10:00
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE	THE NUN R13 1:25,3:30,5:35,7:40,9:45	THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10

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Cinema	Movie	Times	Rating
1	FAST & FURIOUS 3	1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00	PG-13
2	LAKE HOUSE	1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00	GP
3	SCARY MOVIE 4	12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 10:55	R-13
4	CARS	11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30	GP

MTRCB PG-13
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Cinema				
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE NUN	2 SCARY MOVIE 4	3 THE LAKE HOUSE	4 PACQUIAO
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 GARFIELD 2	2 THE LAKE HOUSE	3 THX THE FAST & THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 KINSEY	5 CARS	6 SCARY MOVIE 4	7 THE SECRET OF THE CODE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 THE LAKE HOUSE	2 SCARY MOVIE 4		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE LAKE HOUSE GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX SCARY MOVIE 4 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 KINSEY GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GARFIELD 2 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 CARS GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX SCARY MOVIE 4	2 CARS		
	3 THE LAKE HOUSE	4 THE NUN	5 PACQUIAO	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SCARY MOVIE 4	2 PACQUIAO	3 HILLS HAVE EYES	4 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SCARY MOVIE 4	2 THE NUN		
	3 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO	4 PACQUIAO	5 THE LAKE HOUSE	

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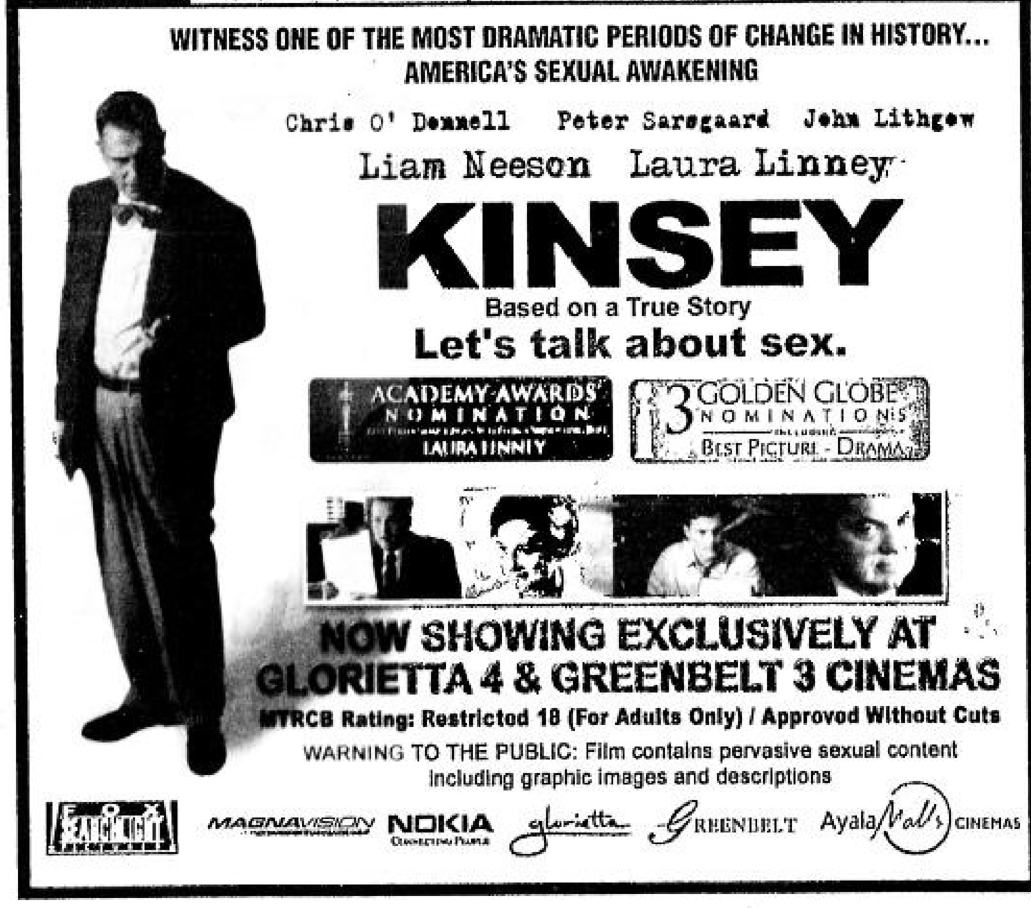
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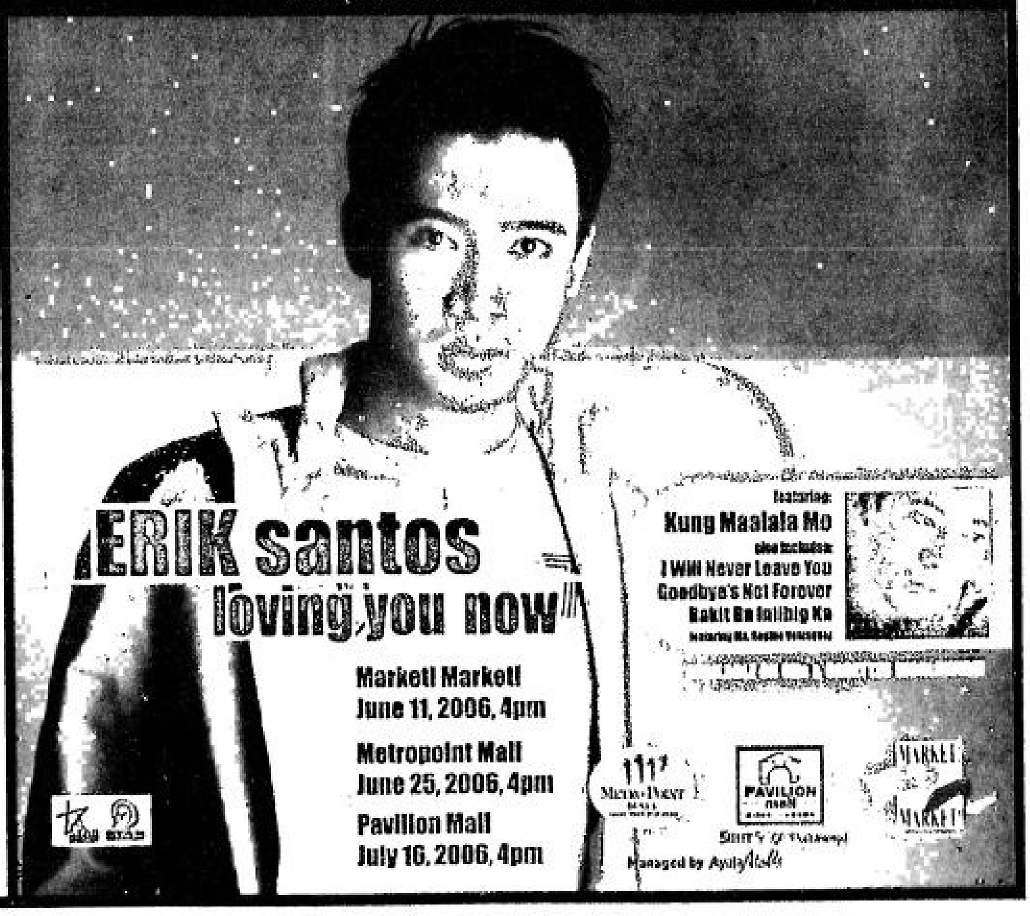
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STAR
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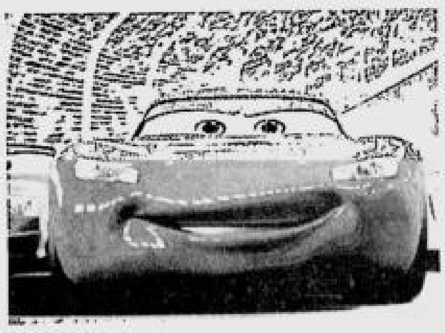
ROUNDUP

Gambling addict

ANA VICTORINO LOST ALMOST EVERYthing to gambling. Her conclusion is that, while legalized casinos are supposed to be helping the government and the poor, it does so at the expense of others who themselves end up being poor.

Her story is on "Probe" tonight, on ABS-CBN after "Insider."



LIGHTNING McQueen in "Cars"

Top draw in US

LOS ANGELES—Cartoon autos beat real racing cars at the box office.

"Cars" took in $33.7 million to remain the top movie for a second straight weekend, while coming in third was "The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift," a tale of illegal street racing that opened with $24 million.

The top 10 US and Canadian theaters Friday through Sunday, according to Exhibitor Relations, official trackers:

1) "Cars," $33.73M; 2. "Nacho Libre," $28.3M; 3) "The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift," $23.97M; 4) "The Lake House," $13.61M; 5) "The Break-Up," $9.83M; 6) "X-Men: The Last Stand," $7.82M; 7) "Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties," $7.28M; 8) "The Omen," $5.64M; 9) "The Da Vinci Code," $5.26M; 10) "Over the Hedge," $4.33M. *AP*

World ranking

LOS ANGELES—"The Da Vinci Code," the film based on Dan Brown's best-selling novel, topped the world's box office for a fifth straight week, raking in some $680 million in ticket sales, the industry daily Variety reported Monday.

Directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks, the movie was produced on a $125-million budget. *AFP*

GEORGE Clooney in "Syriana"

Out goes the case

PARIS—A French court dismissed a suit against George Clooney and Warner Bros. filed by a French screenwriter who alleged that the movie "Syriana" was largely plagiarized from her script, court officials said Monday.

Stephanie Vergniault had claimed the oil-industry thriller borrowed "very largely" from a script she completed in 2002, but the judge in the case said the two scripts were "obviously different."

Vergniault will have to pay her opponents' legal fees, the court officials said. *AP*

Good girl with bad habits?

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

AN E-MAIL FROM SABINEALvarez@yahoo.com about **Julia Clarete** caught my attention. According to the reader, Julia and a male friend gate-crashed the exhibit of her friend in UP and behaved very badly. Here are edited portions of her friend's blog:

"The caterer was telling me that the waiters were already wrapping leftover food for me, when I saw Julia again at the buffet table. This time, she was with a tall guy in black whom I'd seen earlier at the bar with an electric guitar. He'd probably had a drink too many, which might explain why the bar had run out of beer an hour after the opening. This guy had piled up his plate with food—so much food that it seemed he was going to make the cocktail fare his dinner.

"Then, I saw the waiter loading mini sandwiches into a white plastic bag and handing it to Julia. At this point, I wanted to storm the buffet table and scream at her, 'What do you think you're doing? You were not even invited!'

"Maybe they thought there was too much food anyway. But is that any excuse to take advantage of somebody who has worked hard to prepare for the event? They obviously do not belong to polite society."

(For the full story go to http://bossanovadays.blogs.friendster.com/kablog/2006/06/a_moocher_in_th.html)

Not a first

This was not the first time that Julia had been caught in a controversy. Recently, a lesbian complained about Julia allegedly attacking her during a heated argument in a bar. Julia has denied the allegations. But isn't it too much of a coincidence that an art student has also come forward with an exposé about Julia's lack of social graces? Is committing a faux pas already second nature to her that she's no longer aware of it? Is she or isn't she a good girl with bad habits?

Indebtedly yours

An RTW supplier is hoping against hope that the mother of **Sarah Geronimo** will pay her long overdue debt of P150,000 for clothes she got for her (the mother's) boutique. The supplier would rather not bother the young actress-singer about it. It's her mom's problem, not hers. But as a dutiful daughter, I'm sure Sarah will be more than willing to come to her mom's rescue. Considering how overworked Sarah is, she undoubtedly is a "Bituing Walang Utang." And so should her mom be.

LQ?

Andrew Wolfe was seen having an argument with one of the Hotlegs dancers at Klowns Greenhills. A nosey habitue said Andrew and the gay dancer were having an LQ. I suddenly remembered that Andrew's ex-GF **Gwen Garci** told me she once caught him with a gay lover. Is macho Andrew really a "Wolfe" in "sheep's" clothing?

Down with the gown

Ruffa Gutierrez wants to clarify that the gown she'll be wearing as a host of the 22nd Star Awards for Movies is not really worth $17,000, as earlier reported. "It's not that expensive *naman* but it's made by a top European designer. That gown is special because it's one of Yilmaz's third wedding anniversary gifts to me." To avoid more intrigues, Ruffa might end up not wearing the controversial gown *après tout* and don a local creation instead. Down with the gown? Up with the controversy?

Froi forward

Froilan "Froi" Calixto was with the band Jeremiah seven years ago. Now he's back in the scene with a new band called Resoul, plus a CD to boot ("Sabihin Mo")! Unlike his former band's hit song "Nanghihinayang," Froi has no regrets about going solo. "I owe a lot to Jeremiah but it's time to move on." Froi forward!

Dubious survey?

With GMA Network increasing its lead in Mega Manila TV ratings, it hopes to soon duplicate the achievement in Cebu, Davao and Iloilo. Among its initiatives to create awareness among viewers in those areas is the pioneering Kapuso Kabarangay project.

Many are wondering why ABS-CBN, which has been claiming a lead in ratings in these areas, is resorting to mere imitation of Kapuso initiatives. ABS-CBN also came out with print ads in Cebu, Davao and Iloilo indicating their supposedly superior ratings. The network used the TV diary type of survey conducted by Nielsen in Cebu and Davao, while citing data from PSRC's survey for Iloilo. Unlike the Mega-Manila surveys where TV meters are used to generate data, the regional surveys are done using the "day-after recall" mechanism. This type of survey does not guarantee as much accuracy as the meter-based survey.

If GMA Network did not commission the TV diary surveys of Nielsen in Cebu and Davao, could it have been ABS-CBN? If so, doesn't it follow, like in elections, that the groups that commission the surveys get favorable results?

JULIA Clarete

'I saw the waiter handing food in a plastic bag to Julia Clarete. She was not even invited'

Readers' corner

Hi Dolly!

I read a blog last week before your story about the Alicia vs Ashley incident at Embassy was published in the INQUIRER. The poor lady bouncer doesn't have anyone defending her while Alicia's been doing the rounds on TV shows, telling everyone "what really happened." Read an eyewitness account: http://frigidaire.livejournal.com/ : losingmymindbitch@yahoo.com

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 CLOSED
2 SCARY MOVIE 4
MTRCB R-13
3 LAKE HOUSE
MTRCB GP
GARFIELD 2
MTRCB GP
4 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT
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Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
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GARFIELD
1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
CARS
2::20 / 2:45 / 5:10
X-MEN 3
7:40 / 10:00
SCARY MOVIE 4
1:30 / 3:35 / 5:40 / 7:45 / 9:50
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10
THE LAKE HOUSE
1:20 / 3:30 / 5:40 / 7:50 / 10:00
THE NUN
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PACQUIAO
OMEN 666
7:30 / 9.50
THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 3
1:00 / 3:15 / 5:30 / 7:45 / 10:00
THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 3
12:05 / 2:25 / 4:45
THE LAKE HOUSE
7:00 / 9:10
Ali MALL CINEMAS
PACQUIAO
WHORE
12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20
SCARY MOVIE
12:25 / 2:30 / 4:35 / 6:40 / 8:45
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45
THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 3
12:10 R4 / 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30
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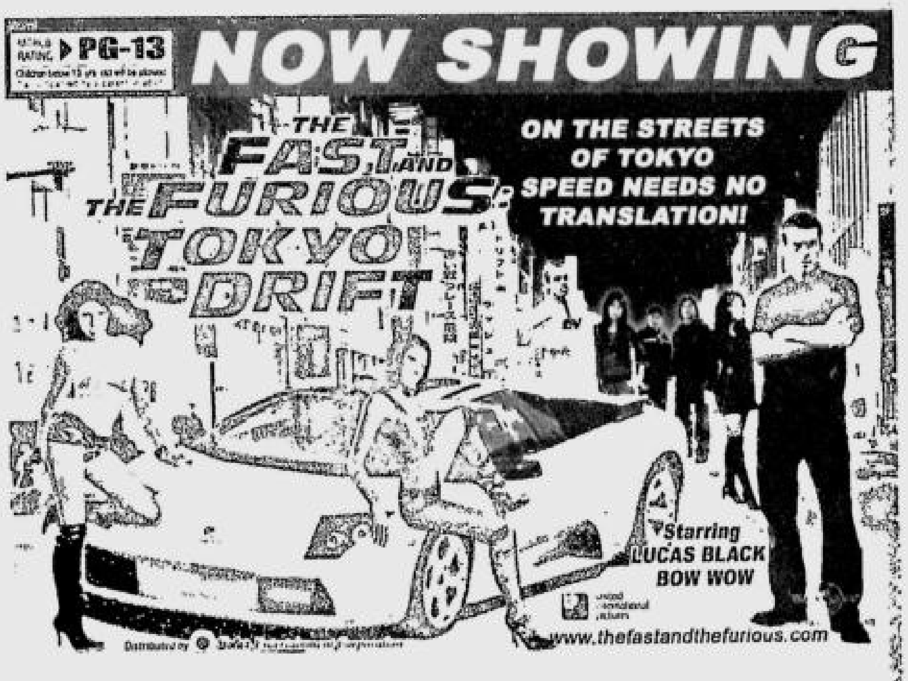
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THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT
ON THE STREETS OF TOKYO SPEED NEEDS NO TRANSLATION!
Starring LUCAS BLACK BOW WOW
www.thefastandthefurious.com

Manhattan Transfer at the Big Dome

MANHATTAN TRANSFER—THE multi-Grammy award-winning quartet of Tim Hauser (bass), Cheryl Bentyne (soprano), Janis Siegel (alto), and Alan Paul (tenor)—will perform on July 5 at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu City and July 7 at the Araneta Coliseum.

"The Manhattan Transfer Live!" will feature the hits "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square," "Smile Again," "Birdland," "Boy from New York City," "Twilight Zone," "Until I Met You," "It's Gonna Take a Miracle," "On the Boulevard" and "Shakers Song." Tickets are priced at P3,500, P3,000, P2,500, P1,500, P800 and P300. Call 911-5555.

SHOW TIME

Duo Petrarca

US-based neo-classical singers Duo Petrarca are in town for a series of free concerts in non-traditional concert venues around Metro Manila.

Composed of Ilocos-born pianist Jeremy Rafal and Costa Rican tenor Ulises Solano, the duo will interpret operatic aria, Filipino folk songs and neo-classical pieces during performances at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila today; Paco Park tomorrow; The Salvation Army Manila Central Corps, June 25; and the Philippine Women's University and the Centro Escolar University, June 26.

Inspired by the ideals of Francesco Petrarca, Father of Humanism, the duo has come together with the purpose of reviving the ideals of the vernacular language in classical vocal music.

PETRARCA Duo

Formed in 2005, Duo Petrarca is acknowledged as among the most expressive young interpreters of art songs in the US Midwest.

The duo seeks to perform, promote and create music in languages that have no widespread representation in the classical concert stage, and to communities with limited access to the arts.

Today

Jojo A All the Way and Gimme A Break at RJTV Bar

Acoustic Jive at Merk's Bar

Kearney Street at Tavern on the Square

Tomorrow

RJ 'n Friends and Moonstrucks at RJTV Bar

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square

MTV Live Sessions at Café Lupe featuring True Faith

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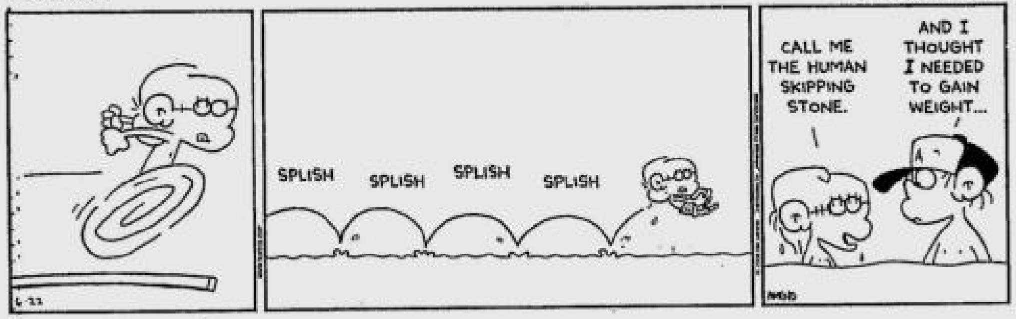
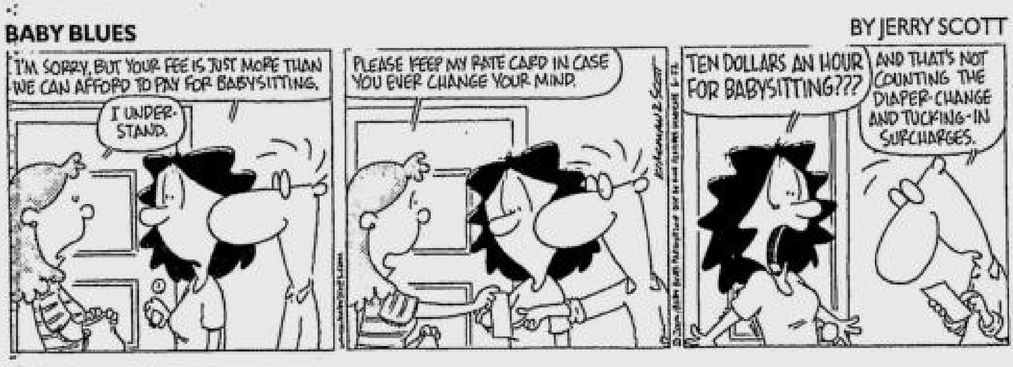
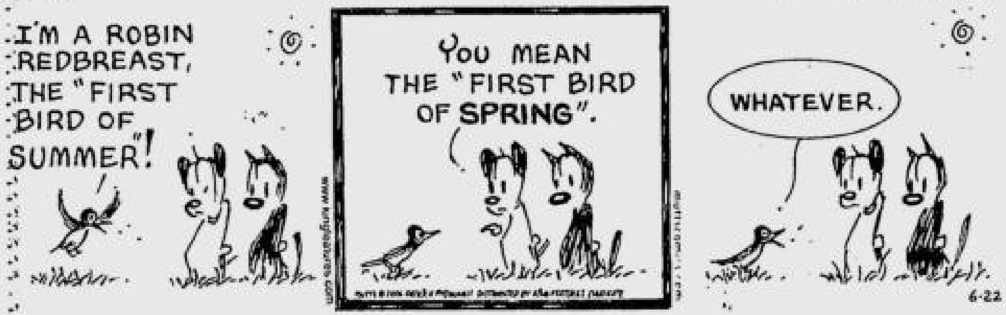

SPLISH
SPLISH
SPLISH
SPLISH
CALL ME THE HUMAN SKIPPING STONE.
AND I THOUGHT I NEEDED TO GAIN WEIGHT...
6-22

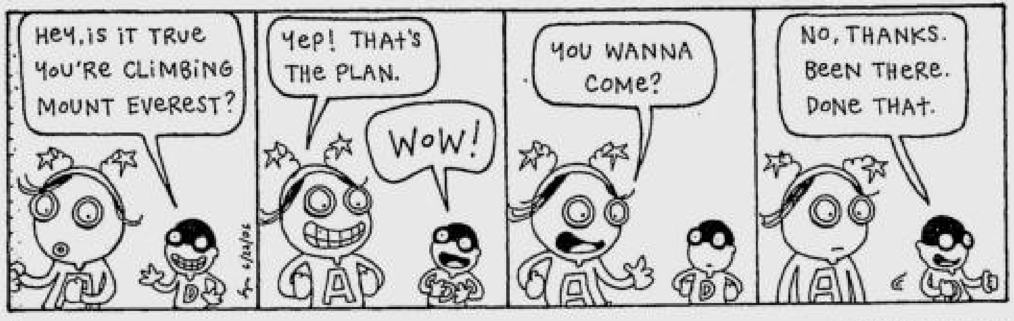
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M SORRY, BUT YOUR FEE IS JUST MORE THAN WE CAN AFFORD TO PAY FOR BABYSITTING.
I UNDERSTAND.
PLEASE KEEP MY RATE CARD IN CASE YOU EVER CHANGE YOUR MIND.
TEN DOLLARS AN HOUR FOR BABYSITTING???
AND THAT'S NOT COUNTING THE DIAPER-CHANGE AND TUCKING-IN SURCHARGES.

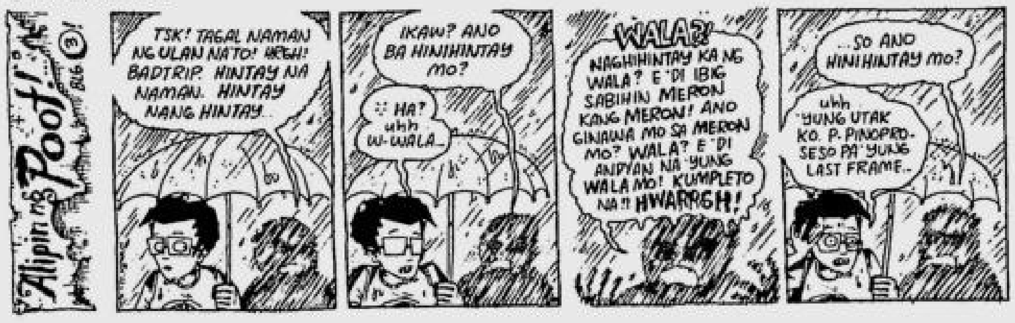
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I'M A ROBIN REDBREAST, THE "FIRST BIRD OF SUMMER"!
YOU MEAN THE "FIRST BIRD OF SPRING".
WHATEVER.
6-22

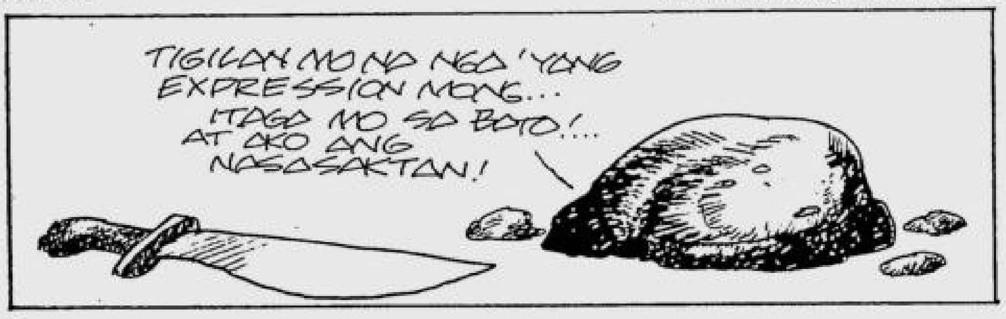
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, is iT TRue You're CLiMBiNG MouNT EveresT?
Yep! THAT's The PLAN.
WoW!
You WANNA Come?
No, THANKS. Been There. Done THAT.

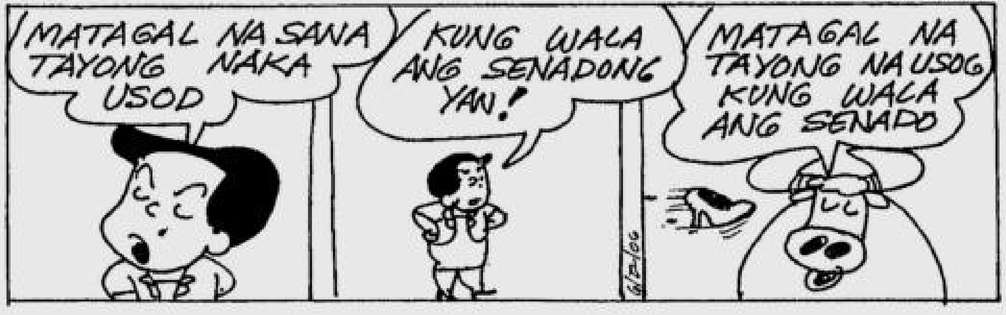
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


Alipin ng Poot!
TSK! TAGAL NAMAN NG ULAN NATO! URGH! BADTRIP. HINTAY NA NAMAN. HINTAY NANG HINTAY...
IKAW? ANO BA HINIHINTAY MO?
HA? uhh W-WALA...
WALA?! NAGHIHINTAY KA NG WALA? E 'DI IBIG SABIHIN MERON KANG MERON! ANO GINAWA MO SA MERON MO? WALA? E 'DI ANDYAN NA 'YUNG WALA MO! KUMPLETO NA!! HWARRGH!
...SO ANO HINIHINTAY MO?
uhh 'YUNG UTAK KO. P. PINOPROSESO PA 'YUNG LAST FRAME...

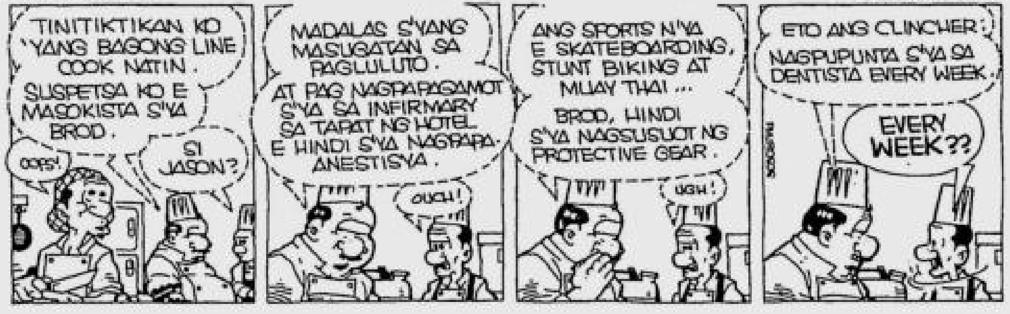
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


TIGILAN MO NA NGA 'YONG EXPRESSION MONG... ITAGO MO SA BOTO!... AT AKO ANG NASASAKTAN!

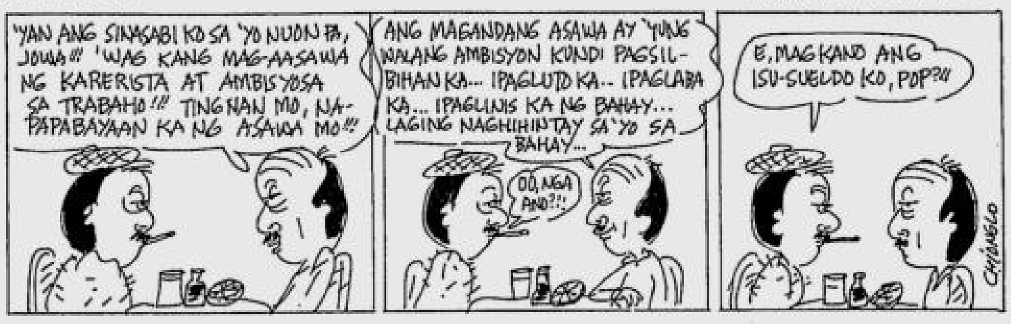
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


MATAGAL NA SANA TAYONG NAKA USOD
KUNG WALA ANG SENADONG YAN!
MATAGAL NA TAYONG NAUSOG KUNG WALA ANG SENADO

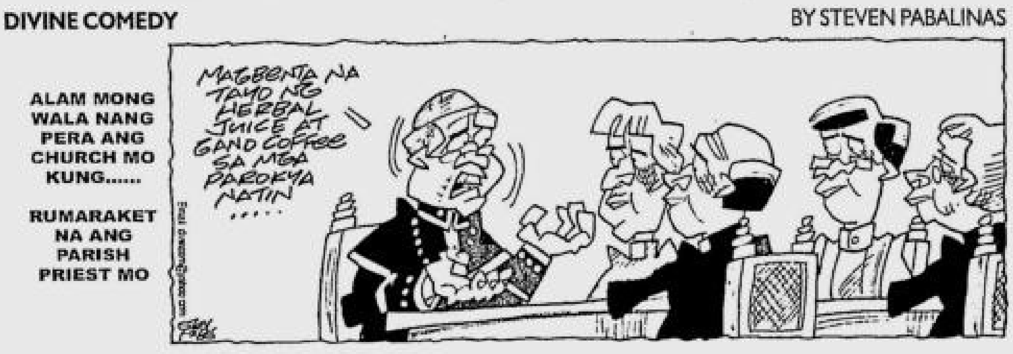
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


TINITIKTIKAN KO 'YANG BAGONG LINE COOK NATIN.
SUSPETSA KO E MASOKISTA S'YA BROD.
OOPS!
SI JASON?
MADALAS S'YANG MASUGATAN SA PAGLULUTO.
AT PAG NAGPAPAGAMOT S'YA SA INFIRMARY SA TAPAT NG HOTEL E HINDI S'YA NAGPAPA-ANESTISYA.
OUCH!
ANG SPORTS N'YA E SKATEBOARDING, STUNT BIKING AT MUAY THAI...
BROD, HINDI S'YA NAGSUSUOT NG PROTECTIVE GEAR.
UGH!
ETO ANG CLINCHER: NAGPUPUNTA S'YA SA DENTISTA EVERY WEEK.
EVERY WEEK??

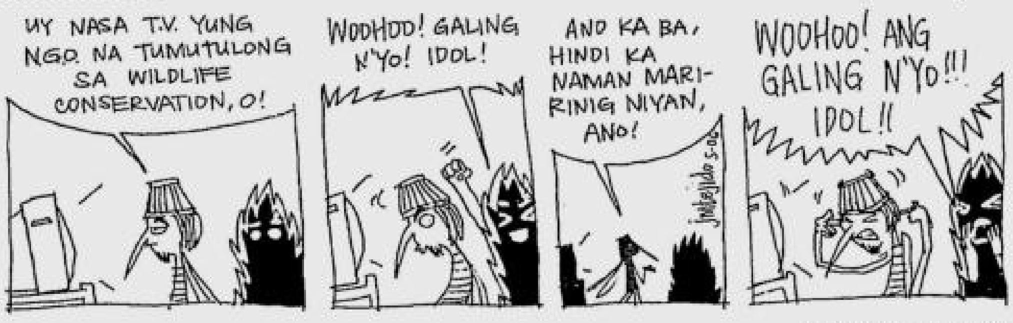
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


'YAN ANG SINASABI KO SA 'YO NUON PA, JOWA!!! 'WAG KANG MAG-AASAWA NG KARERISTA AT AMBISYOSA SA TRABAHO!!! TINGNAN MO, NAPAPABAYAAN KA NG ASAWA MO!!!
ANG MAGANDANG ASAWA AY 'YUNG WALANG AMBISYON KUNDI PAGSILBIHAN KA... IPAGLUTO KA... IPAGLABA KA... IPAGLINIS KA NG BAHAY... LAGING NAGHIHINTAY SA 'YO SA BAHAY...
OO, NGA ANO?!!
E, MAGKANO ANG ISU-SUELDO KO, POP?!!
CHIONGLO

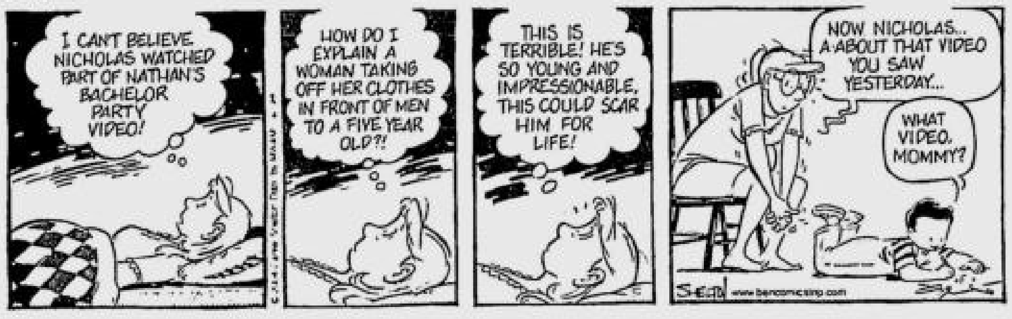
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ALAM MONG WALA NANG PERA ANG CHURCH MO KUNG......
RUMARAKET NA ANG PARISH PRIEST MO
MAGBENTA NA TAYO NG HERBAL JUICE AT GANO COFFEE SA MGA PAROKYA NATIN .....

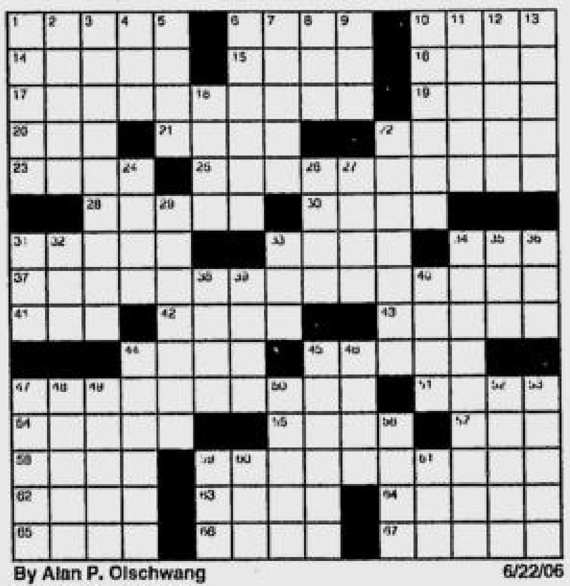
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


UY NASA T.V. YUNG NGO NA TUMUTULONG SA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION, O!
WOOHOO! GALING N'YO! IDOL!
ANO KA BA, HINDI KA NAMAN MARIRINIG NIYAN, ANO!
WOOHOO! ANG GALING N'YO!!! IDOL!!

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


I CAN'T BELIEVE NICHOLAS WATCHED PART OF NATHAN'S BACHELOR PARTY VIDEO!
HOW DO I EXPLAIN A WOMAN TAKING OFF HER CLOTHES IN FRONT OF MEN TO A FIVE YEAR OLD?!
THIS IS TERRIBLE! HE'S SO YOUNG AND IMPRESSIONABLE. THIS COULD SCAR HIM FOR LIFE!
NOW NICHOLAS... A-ABOUT THAT VIDEO YOU SAW YESTERDAY...
WHAT VIDEO, MOMMY?
SHELTON www.bencomicstrip.com

DAILY CROSSWORD


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67

By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
6/22/06

ACROSS
1 Ship of the desert
6 Wedding cake layer
10 Taj Mahal location
14 Hersey's bell town
15 Caen's river
16 Paper bets
17 Start of G.K. Chesterton quote
19 Agents, briefly
20 Before, before
21 Son of Judah
22 "A Doll's House" playwright
23 Russ. and Lat., once
25 Part 2 of quote
28 Fencers' tools
30 Chicken products
31 Get into shape
33 Patella's location
34 Sandra of "Gidget"
37 Part 3 of quote
41 Settle a debt
42 Urgent letters?
43 Chores
44 Pro's foe
45 DEA raids
47 Part 4 of quote
51 Fling
54 Cognizant
55 Joe Orton play
57 Luau garland
58 Rani's wrap
59 End of quote
62 Big Ben info
63 Frost coating
64 Requisites
65 Schedule figs.
66 Surrounded by
67 Full of lip

DOWN
1 Actress Phoebe
2 Hebrew months
3 Prepare
4 Opposite of WSW
5 Beginning of a motive?
6 Sacred scrolls
7 Singer Cara
8 Rock composer Brian
9 Ump's colleague
10 Boeing rival
11 Leaves in the Bible?
12 Currency unit of India
13 Orgs.
18 Put money in the kitty
22 Swallows
24 Polish partner?
26 Bill of fare
27 Disney exec Robert
29 Add dash to
31 Spigot
32 Cell stuff
33 Keystone karacter?
34 Vanishes
35 BPOE member
36 Chicago transp.
38 Como __ Usted?
39 Razor's cut
40 Unit of power
44 Eaglets' abodes
45 Flourished
46 Vehicles for ETs
47 Savor
48 Stand by for
49 Fate
50 Varnish ingredient
52 Germs
53 Spacek of "Carrie"
56 Sawbucks
59 Song syllable
60 That guy
61 Comic DeLaria

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

O	M	I	T	■	P	A	L	I	N	■	B	E	S	T
L	A	L	O	■	E	N	O	L	A	■	U	T	A	H
A	G	E	R	■	S	T	A	I	R	■	I	A	G	O
F	I	R	S	T	T	I	M	E	C	A	L	L	E	R
■	■	■	O	O	O	■	■	■	S	G	D	■	■	■
F	O	S	S	E	■	I	T	S	■	O	S	H	E	A
A	M	T	■	S	E	C	O	N	D	G	U	E	S	S
C	A	R	P	■	D	I	N	E	R	■	P	A	S	S
T	H	I	R	D	D	E	G	R	E	E	■	V	E	E
S	A	P	O	R	■	R	A	T	■	T	H	E	N	T
■	■	■	G	A	G	■	■	■	P	O	E	■	■	■
F	O	U	R	T	H	D	I	M	E	N	S	I	O	N
I	D	L	E	■	O	A	T	E	R	■	O	S	L	O
F	E	N	S	■	S	T	E	R	E	■	H	E	E	D
E	R	A	S	■	T	A	M	E	S	■	T	E	S	S

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6/22/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have an intelligent, inquiring mind. You learn quickly and can succeed in many different fields. Your organizational abilities promote your business savvy. It's important to find a partner who understands your sensitivity. After the age 30, you become bolder and more risk-taking. This is a year of wrapping up things and letting go. (You have to create room for something new.)
Birthdate of: Dan Brown, author; Kurt Warner, quarterback; Meryl Streep, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): When it comes to minding the affairs of others or being responsible for shared possessions, you might be unsure of what to do. If you feel hesitant, do nothing. Play it safe.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a confusing day to talk to partners and close friends about living arrangements, domestic issues, family matters and the division of labor. You're not actually sure of what you want.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're not sure what to do at work today. You see the big picture, and you see the details as well. You have both mouse mind and eagle mind. What's your strategy?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a confusing day for business, commerce and financial speculation. You could meet with opposition to your ideas.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You have sensible yet grandiose ideas about how to do something at home or within your family today. One moment you believe in what you want to do; the next moment you don't.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your mind is alert but restless today. You see the big picture, and you see the little details as well. Just let this cook on the back burner of your mind.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Discussions with friends about possessions and financial matters could go in circles today. People will offer what they think is sound advice. But you're not sure.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with bosses, parents, VIPs and teachers are vague and counterproductive today. You see both sides of the picture, but it's tough to know what to do.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Instead of going off half-cocked about travel plans or something to do with education, you're better off giving everything a sober, second thought. Just do it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): In one way, you have a warm feeling in your tummy about things today. Yet in the next moment, you're unsure about the same thing. Go figure.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Partners and close friends might not go along with your ideas about career expansion. Perhaps they want to avoid talking to a boss or VIP.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Keep plugging along at work today. Don't worry if you can't achieve travel plans or your ambitions related to publishing, the media and education.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	3					5		6
8			4					
					2			1
	6		7			9		
		8			9		4	
3			1					
					6			5
7		4					2	

Difficulty Level ★★★
6/22

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	1	4	7	8	9	2	3	5
9	3	8	5	2	1	6	4	7
7	5	2	3	4	6	1	8	9
1	2	7	8	5	4	9	6	3
3	8	5	6	9	2	7	1	4
4	9	6	1	7	3	8	5	2
5	7	9	4	6	8	3	2	1
8	4	1	2	3	7	5	9	6
2	6	3	9	1	5	4	7	8

Difficulty Level ★★★

Snooky fired from 'Barbell'

From page A2-1

rez, in GMA 7's adaptation of the Mars Ravelo *komiks* classic.

The actress' tardiness had caused serious production delays, according to Wilma Galvante, GMA 7 senior vice president for TV Entertainment.

Galvante told INQUIRER on Tuesday: "I don't want to go into the details of how much money we lose every time a taping schedule is canceled, but it does cost."

"Captain Barbell" is being produced for about P50 million.

Galvante said the problem had been relayed to her last month, even before the show premiered on May 29.

Simple

"I was in the US when I learned," she recalled. "It was easy for us to make a decision." That decision was to terminate Snooky's services.

"To me, it's simple," Galvante said. "We gave her a break, and she wasted it."

Snooky's tardiness has affected the rest of the cast. It is said that Richard Gomez, who portrays Snooky's husband in the series, was very upset once, when she showed up 12 hours late for taping. The call time was 6 a.m., but Snooky showed up at 6 p.m.

During the press con to launch the show last month, Richard made a snide remark: "It's only 11 p.m.," he said. "She must be on her way."

Actually, Snooky didn't show up.

Cautious

The actress is being managed by Anabelle Rama, Richard Gutierrez's mother, under a contract that expires in July next year.

Galvante said Anabelle had been cautious about recommending Snooky for the part in "Barbell."

"It's not true that Annabelle pressured us into hiring Snooky," Galvante said. "We picked Snooky from a list. She looked [perfect] for the part."

Annabelle could not be reached for comment. But her associate, publicist Jun Lalin said Snooky could not cope with the schedule. "*Hindi raw n'ya kaya* (She couldn't handle it)," Lalin told INQUIRER.

Galvante stressed that tapings were "a fact of life" for TV shows. "All stars go through that," she said.

Snooky recently married musician Niño Mendoza after her marriage to Ricardo Cepeda was annulled early this year.

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3 THE SECRET OF THE CODE
4 THE NUN
5 PACQUIAO the MOVIE
6 THE DA VINCI CODE
AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
7 WHORE
8 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
9 CARS / GARFIELD 2
10 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 SCARY MOVIE 4
2 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
LAKE HOUSE
3 THE NUN
4 PACQUIAO the MOVIE
5 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
6 THE SECRET OF THE CODE
7 WHORE

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1 THE NUN
2 SCARY MOVIE 4
3 LAKE HOUSE
4 PACQUIAO the MOVIE
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GARFIELD 2
7 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
8 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO

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2 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
3 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
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5 SCARY MOVIE 4
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4 RESERVE

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3 PACQUIAO the MOVIE
4 LAKE HOUSE

CHECK THIS OUT ▶▶▶▶

MEET GARFIELD IN PERSON!

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24 Robinsons Place Dasmariñas (4:00-5:00PM)
25 Robinsons Place Sta. Rosa (4:00-5:00PM)

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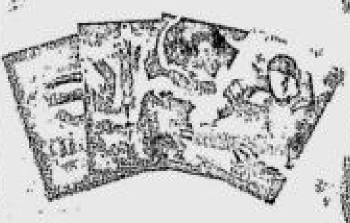

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KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
SCARY MOVIE 4

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CARS
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO

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SCARY MOVIE 4
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THE NUN
GARFIELD 2
MANAY PO
XMEN III
SCARY MOVIE 4
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
FAST AND FURIOUS
CARS
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
SECRET OF THE CODE
CARS
AMERICAN HAUNTING

SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
SCARY MOVIE 4

SM CITY STA. MESA
SCARY MOVIE 4
LAKE HOUSE
THE NUN
SECRET OF THE CODE
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
THE OMEN
XMEN III
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
AMERICAN HAUNTING

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AMERICAN HAUNTING
GARFIELD 2
SCARY MOVIE 4
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
THE OMEN
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
THE NUN
XMEN III
LAKE HOUSE

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CARS
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
LAKE HOUSE
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE

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FAST AND FURIOUS 3
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE

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PACQUIAO THE MOVIE

SM CITY CLARK
SCARY MOVIE 4
LAKE HOUSE
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SECRET OF THE CODE
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE

SM CITY PAMPANGA
SCARY MOVIE 4
SECRET OF THE CODE
LAKE HOUSE
INSIDE MAN
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE

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KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
GARFIELD 2
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SM CITY STA. ROSA
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
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PACQUIAO THE MOVIE

SM CITY CEBU
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PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
SCARY MOVIE 4
GARFIELD 2
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LAKE HOUSE
SECRET OF THE CODE
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
AQUAMARINE
INSIDE MAN

SM CITY CABATAN
INSIDE MAN
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
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4 KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
5 PACQUIAP

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3 SCARY MOVIE - 4
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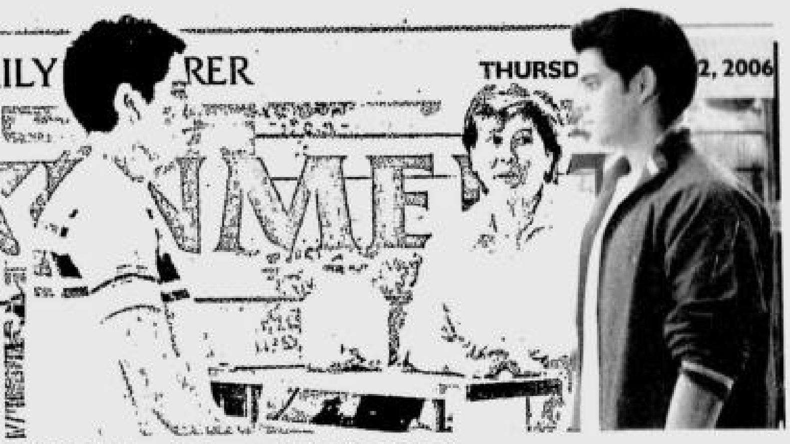

ANNABELLE and twin sons during the ad shoot

Headache times two

BY NOW WE ALL MUST HAVE SEEN THE headache pill commercial of twins Richard and Raymond Gutierrez, starring their mom Annabelle Rama.

There is no truth to the rumor that it's really Annabelle who gives the boys a headache, or that R&R drive their mom nuts.

Now we know that her talent, Snooky, may be a bigger aggravation to the feisty manager than her own sons. (*See story page A2-1.*)

CHERIE Gil

Those talented Eigenmanns!

We caught Cherie Gil's riveting performance in the stage production of "Doubt" last weekend. We couldn't stop applauding, but guess who was the most enthusiastic? Cherie's brother Michael de Mesa. When Mike did "Rocky Horror Picture Show" a while back, Cherie was in the audience, too, not only cheering ... but dancing in the middle aisle!

RUSHES

Brangelina: 'We'll adopt next'

LOS ANGELES—Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt plan to adopt another child, the actress said in a TV interview.

"Yeah, yeah. Next, we'll adopt," Jolie said on CNN television's "Anderson Cooper 360."

Jolie, 31, also revealed that she donates a third of her income to charity.

"Yeah, well, I had a stupid income for what I do," she said, laughing. The actress reportedly earned some $20 million for her role in "Mr and Mrs Smith," where she played opposite Pitt. *AFP*

One more time

LONDON—Hollywood star Sandra Bullock said she would love a chance to work yet again with Keanu Reeves after the two "Speed" stars were reunited for a romantic mystery drama.

Bullock and Reeves shared the red carpet in central London for the European premiere of "The Lake House," by Argentinian director Alejandro Agresti.

The actress told reporters it was a "hard film" to shoot, but said she'd like to go back before the cameras with Reeves, "sooner rather than later." *AFP*

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☐ At least 16 but not more than 28 years old on July 1, 2006.
☐ A Filipino citizen or of dual citizenship (possessing both Filipino and foreign citizenship).

You must prepare:
☐ Two (2) songs: One (1) fast and one (1) slow.

You must complete:
☐ A Philippine Idol application form available at the audition venue or at www.philippineidol.com.

You must bring the following on the day of the audition:
☐ Two (2) photos:
One (1) close-up (at least passport size), and one (1) full body (at least 3R size)
☐ Original and two (2) certified true copies of birth certificate. For contestants with dual citizenship, original and two (2) certified true copies of his Philippine passport
☐ One (1) valid ID (passport, school, company, SSS/GSIS, or professional I.D.)

Reminder:
Look your best and dress to impress.
Please don't wear clothes with logos.

Ipakita na ang pang-Philippine Idol na galing!
Isang tulog na lang, Mindanao audition na!

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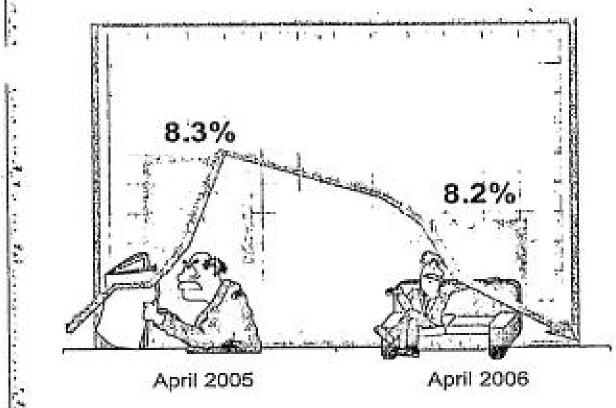
Gov't eyes supplemental budget

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Unemployment rate down in April 2006

In April 2006, from a total labor force of almost 36 million, 2.9 million - or 8.2 percent - were unemployed, down from the 8.3 percent registered in the same period last year.



Source: National Statistics Office
Kate V. Pedroso PDI Research

Money to pump-prime economy this year

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION IS EXPECTED TO ASK CONGRESS for a supplemental budget to be able to pursue the pump-priming of the economy this year despite the failure of the legislature to pass the proposed P1.053-trillion national budget for 2006.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the economic team would look for ways to make government spending flexible and not be constricted by the 2005 reenacted budget.

Budget Undersecretary Mario Relampagos said that if the government would have revenues in excess of what was programmed, then the executive branch could go to Congress to ask for a supplemental budget.

Under the 2005 fiscal program, which the government is now using because of the reenactment of last year's budget, it was supposed to raise only P783.153 billion in revenues to finance bulk of the P963.156 billion in expenditures.

But since revenue-collecting agencies were told to raise a combined P975.4 billion for 2006, then the government would post excess revenues compared with the 2005 revenue program. This excess could be a basis for asking Congress for a supplemental budget, Re-

GOV'T/B2

High court says RCBC liable to pay P100M in taxes

By Armand N. Nocum
News

FOR LOSING ITS CASE ON TECHnicality, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) will now have to settle P100.7 million in taxes with the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Supreme Court ruled yesterday.

In a nine-page decision, the high court upheld a ruling of the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) denying the bid of RCBC to evade payment of its tax liabilities following the alleged failure of its counsel to file an appeal on time.

"Relief cannot be granted on flimsy excuse that the failure to appeal was due to the neglect of petitioner's counsel. Otherwise, all that a losing party would do to salvage his case would be to invoke neglect or mistake of his counsel as a ground for reversing or setting aside the adverse judgment, thereby putting no end to litigation," the SC said in a decision penned by Associate Justice Consuelo Ynares-Santiago.

In a petition for review filed before the high court, RCBC argued that it was denied due process because it was not given the opportunity to be heard to prove that its failure to file a motion for reconsideration from the dismissal of its petition for review with the CTA for the cancellation of the BIR assessment of its liabilities was due to the failure of its employee to forward the copy of the tax court's Sept. 10, 2003, resolution.

The bank said the matter constitutes an "excusable negligence" on its part.

In its resolution, the CTA dismissed the bank's petition for review considering that it was filed beyond the 30-day period. Due to the failure of RCBC to file a motion for reconsideration, the CTA's decision became final on Oct. 1, 2003, and entry of judgment was made on Dec. 1, 2003.

In its ruling, the high court said RCBC should blame its own lawyer for being remiss in complying with the court's order for lawyers to adopt a system whereby they can always receive promptly judicial notices and pleadings intended for them.

"Apparently, petitioner's counsel was not only remiss in complying with this admonition but

HIGH/B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

PETPlans wants out of pre-need business /B6

Naia 3 to move forward once gov't pays up /B10

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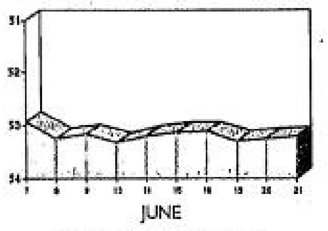


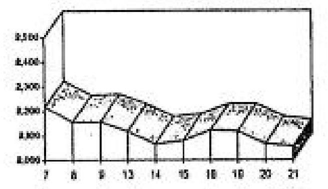
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 53.21 = $1
As of 5 p.m., June 21, 2006

¥ 114.74 = $1
As of 5 p.m., June 21, 2006

GOLD: $576.90-577.40
per ounce Hong Kong, June 21, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks hit 6-month lows

SHARE PRICES CLOSED DOWN 0.50 percent yesterday, extending losses to hit six-month lows on continued concerns over the prospects for higher interest rates, dealers said.

The composite index lost 10.32 points to 2,057.77 after moving between 2,034.49 and 2,069.08. This was its weakest close since Dec. 19 last year, when it ended at 2,024.70.

STOCKS/B6

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Peddler on the roof

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SOME POWER BROKERS MUST NOW BE looking forward to a multimillion-peso bonanza from the sale of the government power plant in Masinloc, Zambales.

The money is coming from the Malaysian firm Ranhill Berhad, which is buying out a group called YNN, which in turn won the controversial bidding for the power plant.

Ranhill is paying for the shell company YNN a handsome amount of $8 million—or, at the current exchange rate of the peso, a whopping P425 million.

That is not bad for a company like YNN that, as of last December, had a capital of only about P1 million tops.

To us, consumers of costly electricity in this country—which only happens to enjoy the second highest electricity rates in the whole of Asia—there is only one question: Who among the hangers-on in this cute administration of Gloriaetta will feast on the P425-million bonanza of YNN?

* * *

All the thieves in and around the Palace—plus, of course, all those in the Department of Energy (DOE), the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), and the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (Psalm)—may wash their hands until the skin peels off, for all we care.

But the guys down here in my barangay know that those bastards again sold us down the river!

You see, the shell company YNN is nothing but a broker. It is what we, the public, deridingly refer to as "influence peddler."

And to go into that kind of racket, YNN needs connections in this cute administration.

One of them, from what I heard, is an ex-Cabinet member who is now quite close to the Palace. Exactly how much he is going to get out of the YNN deal is still the topic of whispers in business circles. I am sure it's in the hundreds of million.

For their invaluable help, YNN should also thank the ERC and the Psalm, not to mention the board of Meralco, without whose timely intercession, stupidity and greed the YNN deal would have fallen through.

With a paid-up capital of only P625,000 therefore, YNN group now stands to make P425 million. Guess who will eventually pay for all that?

* * *

To get the P425 million from Ranhill, based on the Ranhill announcement, YNN must nevertheless meet certain conditions.

That, again, will be the work of a certain Sunny Sun, the main broker in the YNN group, who is said to be friends with officials in all levels of the energy sector, peddling his ware from the floor to the roof of their offices.

Thus, Sunny Sun will again ask for little favors from Psalm, Meralco and the ERC. One of them is the "supply contract" with Meralco. Another is the extension of the deadline for the payment for the power plant.

In a few days, YNN must cough off $227 million as "upfront payment" for its $526-million bid for the power plant. By the looks of it, YNN and Ranhill cannot do the deal before the deadline.

Thus, YNN—through Sunny Sun and his connections in the ERC, Psalm and the Palace—must get another "extension" from Psalm for the third time.

Under the bidding rules, YNN should have made the $227-million "upfront payment" immediately. That's why it was called "upfront" money, duh!

It has been almost two years since the bidding, and YNN has yet to make the "upfront" payment for the simple reason that YNN did not have the money.

Psalm of course forgot to do a little check on YNN's financial capability. Moreover, Psalm did all sorts of manipulation to extend the payment period.

The other condition about the "supply contract" with Meralco, according to the Ranhill announcement, is in the "advanced stages."

But then again, the announcement said, that contract must be "in form and substance satisfactory to Ranhill."

Uh-oh, that's bad news to Meralco customers.

* * *

Now, for the sake of action stars in the Senate, this is the kind of scandal we do not need in the privatization of the Napocor power plants.

First, Psalm allowed itself to be fooled by somebody with a short name, who formed a group only four months before the bidding. What's that, stupid or corrupt?

And then the ERC and DOE came into the picture. The ERC conveniently suspended a rule to accommodate the supply contract with Meralco.

So, with that kind of dirty play, how do we attract investors in the power sector?

Meanwhile, the delay in the payment for the Masinloc plant means that we, taxpayers, must shoulder the interest payments on the government loans for the very same plant—thanks to this cute administration of Gloriaetta.

* * *

It seems that old-time banker Antonio Alindogan is on the way out as DBP chair in favor of Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas.

Alindogan was a member of the Monetary Board, and Sto. Tomas never was a banker all her life. Those in the business sector, no wonder, are mystified by it all.

Still, we must understand that, after the Hyatt incident last year, this cute administration must reward its people for their blind loyalty.

The only thing is, Alindogan has this baby called micro-lending. In fact, he sprang out of retirement and accepted the DBP position, precisely to pursue his projects in micro-lending.

And everybody thought that, in various business fora and press conferences, this cute administration wanted the very same micro-lending to be the cornerstone of its economic program for the countryside. So much for press releases!

* * *

Our hero in the insurance business apparently is getting away with that case over some P800 million in unpaid documentary stamp tax.

So, what did he do to, er, "fix" the problem that first cropped up during the time of the man named Band ... Wrist Band?

Under this cute administration, one of the BIR deputy commissioners reportedly also got into the picture.

This time around, according to whispers in the insurance business, it seems that the handsome devil has taken care of everybody in the BIR, from top to bottom.

Is he really that powerful?

ONB pays out P171M in dividends

By Judy Quiros,
PDI Mindanao Bureau

A CLIENT of One Network Bank ATM holder withdraws her cash from an ATM branch in Toril branch in Davao City. The rural bank owns the 8th largest fleet of ATMs under the Megalink network.

BING GONZALES, PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

DAVAO CITY—ONE NETWORK Bank (ONB), the country's largest rural bank, this month paid out a total of P171.4 million in dividends to its stockholders—the largest single payout in the history of rural banking in the country.

During the third Annual Stockholders' meeting here on Saturday, ONB president Alex Buenaventura said the payout—consisting of P164 million in shares of stocks and P7.3 million in cash—would enable the bank to sustain its capital resources and profitability.

ONB was born when three rural banks in Mindanao—Network Rural Bank in Davao del Sur, Rural Bank of Panabo in Davao del Norte, and Provident Rural Bank of Cotabato in North Cotabato—consolidated their assets and operation in 2004.

Following the consolidation, it became the largest private banking network on the island. ONB's current total assets are P4.3 billion.

From 51 branches since the consolidation, ONB expanded to 62 branches by the second half of 2006.

Seven more branches are set to open in Mindanao's remotest areas.

Based on ONB's 2005 annual report, demand and savings deposits reached almost P2 billion, surplus and surplus reserves hit P171.9 million, undivided profits reached P69 million, and appraisal increment reserve was pegged at P18.5 million.

The bank now serves an estimated 370,000 depositors and almost 70,000 borrowers in Mindanao.

"Despite its remarkable growth, ONB is not interested in competing with commercial banks and wants to remain a rural bank," Buenaventura said.

He also said that the bank is targeting a net income of P213 million this year.

"Capital income is projected to shoot up to P970 million by yearend, 90 percent of which is stock dividend," Buenaventura said.

He said the main growth drivers of ONB are lending to micro-businesses and agriculture sector, and investments in electronic banking facilities such as automated teller machine (ATM) units.

Its current loan portfolio amounts to P3.5 billion.

ONB owns the 8th largest fleet of ATMs under the Megalink network, competing head-on with the ATM facilities of leading commercial and thrift banks in the country. It is the only rural bank nationwide that is a member of Megalink.

Buenaventura said even Megalink had commended the bank for the aggressive growth of its ATM network.

ONB now has 41 ATM machines throughout Mindanao.

The bank wants to become a major force in the development of the Mindanao countryside, Buenaventura said.

ONB vice chair Antonio Avelino said what makes ONB the preferred rural bank among Mindanao clients is its philosophy of devoting its resources solely for Mindanao communities.

GDP likely expanded 5.5% in 2nd quarter

Strong showing in exports, agriculture cited

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY, AS measured by the gross domestic product (GDP), likely expanded by more than 5.5 percent in the second quarter of the year given the strong performance of the agriculture and export sectors.

This was the forecast made by Romulo Neri, the country's economic planning secretary and director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Neri said the projection kept the Philippines within the full-year GDP growth target of between 5.5 and 6.2 percent.

GDP, the most common tool used in measuring an economy's performance, is the sum of the values of all goods and services produced within the economy in a given period.

According to Neri, the double-digit and higher-than-target growth of the export sector in the previous months is expected to be sustained through the remaining months of the year given the strong global demand for electronics, the country's major export product.

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that the country's exports expanded by 15.2 percent to $14.75 billion year-on-year in the January-to-April period, when almost all major export products registered growth.

The 15.2-percent growth in exports as of April was also much higher than the 8-percent export growth target set for the full year.

The Neda earlier said the growth in exports, led by electronics, was due to increasing demand for products like MP3 players and cellular phones.

Dennis Arroyo, director for planning and policy at the National Economic and Development Authority, echoed Neri's optimism, projecting that exports in the second half of the year would even be higher because of the seasonal inventory buildup.

"Given the trend and the outlook for the second half, it's possible that exports this year will see growth of even more than 15 percent," Arroyo said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture earlier said production in the agriculture sector, which composed about a fifth of the economy, increased by a range of 4.5 to 5 percent in the first half following its 3.8-percent expansion in the first quarter.

NRMDC, Sino partners to acquire ECC for P2-B chromite project development

By Christine A. Gaylican

STATE-OWNED NATURAL RESOURCES Mining Development Corp. (NRMDC) and its joint venture partners will acquire an environmental clearance certificate (ECC) to pursue the development of the P2-billion Dinagat Island chromite project, according to a government official.

NRMDC and its partners United Philippines-China Mining Corp. and Philnico Processing Corp. will have to secure an ECC from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources before they can proceed with the development of the chromite reservation in Northern Surigao.

"This will be the next step after a thorough review of the project's first quarter report," Mines and Geosciences Bureau officer Fred Troncales said. "The ECC is required before the initial project development phase."

Troncales noted that although NRMDC is a private entity operating under the DENR, it would also need to go through the tedious process of obtaining an ECC that would be approved by the Pollution Abjudication Board.

The two project areas in Dinagat cover 9,775 hectares, the NRMDC said in its report.

United Philippines-China Mining Corp. won the rights to work on the 600-hectare area in Barangay Esperanza, Lorenzo. The Chinese-Filipino mining firm will also join Philnico Processing Corp. in developing the second area located on the southern tip of the island, covering 9,175 hectares.

All bids were evaluated by the NRMDC committee's technical board. The board's recommendation, in turn, was checked by the DENR.

Biofuels bill pressed on skeptical Senate

By Abigail L. Ho

FACING STIFF OPPOSITION AT the Senate, the Philippine Fuel Ethanol Alliance continues to push for the passage of the Biofuels Law, stressing that the country is now lagging behind its Asian neighbors in terms of adopting policies for the widespread use of alternative fuels.

Quoting reports from abroad, the group pointed out that China would soon be setting a specific target for the share that ethanol would have in its energy mix, providing political support for the ethanol industry there.

China is currently the world's third largest ethanol producer.

"We have become laggards again in the pursuit for energy independence and clean air," the Ethanol Alliance said. "We see that our Asian neighbors are so advanced in providing policy support for the use of ethanol."

The group said Congress should pass the Biofuels Act as soon as possible, to enable the country not only catch up with its Asian neighbors, but also to become less dependent on imported oil.

"We need to have the same sense of urgency in addressing the twin problems of expensive oil and dirty air as China, Japan, and Thailand," the group said.

Concerns over mandatory ethanol use, expressed by car manufacturers and oil firms, would be dealt with in the same way other Asian countries had addressed theirs, the group added.

The Biofuels Act aims to establish a policy framework for the use of fuel ethanol and coco-biodiesel, providing incentives for the development, production and distribution of such fuels.

The bill passed the House of Representatives with relative ease. But it has hit a snag at the Senate, where senators are questioning some of the bill's provisions, particularly those concerning incentives.

Apart from China, the Ethanol Alliance also related that Japan's Environment Ministry would soon enact legislation requiring all gasoline-powered vehicles to run on gasoline with a 10-percent ethanol blend by 2030.

It also requires all vehicle manufacturers to make all vehicles produced before 2012 compatible with such a fuel blend.

Japan's aggressive support for ethanol, the group said, was mainly due to its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, where Japan committed to slash carbon dioxide emissions by 6 percent by 2012.

High court says RCBC liable to pay P100M in taxes

From page B1

he also failed to check periodically, as an act of prudence and diligence, the status of the pending case before the CTA Second Division," the high court added.

The court noted that even if the petition for relief from judgment would be granted, the case would still likely be dismissed if it would be returned to the CTA's Second Division since its action for the cancellation of its assessments had already prescribed.

"As provided in Section 228, the failure of a taxpayer to appeal from an assessment on time rendered the assessment final, executory and demandable. Consequently, petitioner is precluded from disputing the correctness of the assessment," the high tribunal said.

The court described relief from judgment under Rule 38 of the Rules of Court as a legal remedy that is allowed only in exceptional cases whereby a party seeks to set aside a judgment rendered against him by a court whenever he was unjustly deprived of a hearing or was prevented from taking an appeal, in either case, because of fraud, accident, mistake or excusable neglect.

Gov't eyes ...

From page B1

lampagos said.

Asking for a supplemental budget might require less time for legislation than having a national budget passed. The supplemental budget, if approved by legislators, would be allocated for selected spending needed to boost infrastructure development.

The bicameral conference committee of Congress failed to pass the proposed national budget for 2006 before the legislature went into recess last week.

While the House of Representatives wanted the proposed P1.053-trillion budget intact, the Senate sought a substantial cut and was pushing for a budget of P1.027 trillion. Among the projects thumbed down by the Senate included the "Kilos Asenso Movement" and the "Kalayaan Barangays program," which the Arroyo administration said involved infrastructure development.

But Teves said that the Arroyo administration's economic team still preferred that the 2006 national budget be passed when Congress resumes session in July. If this would not happen, then they could ask for a supplemental budget.

Earlier, the country's economic team has expressed concern over the failure of Congress to pass the budget, noting this would derail initiatives to finally give a boost to the government's anemic spending for infrastructure.

The National Economic and Development Authority earlier said that the government intended to boost its infrastructure spending to 4 percent of the country's gross domestic product over the medium term.

The government's infrastructure spending stands at only 2 percent, making the Philippines lag behind its Southeast Asian neighbors. The Neda said that on average, Southeast Asian countries spend an amount equivalent to 5 percent of GDP on infrastructure.

Poor spending on infrastructure, largely attributed to the national government's budget woes since the onset of the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s, has been largely blamed for a restrained economic growth. Since a third of the government's annual budget is eaten by debt servicing, very little is left for basic services and infrastructure.

Gov't gets $1-M grant to pursue power sector reform

Fund to help in sale of remaining Napocor assets

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE WORLD BANK yesterday signed a $1-million grant to support the implementation of power sector reform and the privatization of National Power Corp. assets.

The money will come from the Policy and Human Resources Development (PHRD) Fund, which is being administered by the World Bank on behalf of the Japanese government.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves signed on behalf of the government and Philippines Country Director Joachim von Amsberg signed for the World Bank. The grant will be implemented through 2007.

Von Amsberg said: "The World Bank appreciates the ongoing efforts of the Philippine government to privatize generating assets and Transco concession, and is prepared to consider support for the phased implementation of the power sector reform program, in close coordination with the Asian Development Bank and the Japanese government."

Finance Secretary Teves said that support for power sector reforms through the technical assistance program financed by the grant and the subsequent power sector operation would make an important contribution to the fiscal reform and growth agenda of the Philippines.

The Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) of 2001 provides a framework for an ambitious program of power sector restructuring and privatization of Napocor assets. The introduction of a transparent, competitive electricity market, through the establishment of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), would promote greater efficiency. This would be complemented by the privatization program which, if successfully implemented, would contribute to improved fiscal stability as well as increased sector efficiency. In recent years, substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the Epira, but much more remains to be done.

The grant will finance a technical assistance program to prepare specific elements of the government's power sector reform program, among them the WESM market surveillance; energy trading and risk management strategies; power demand forecasting and security of power supply, and alternative rate regulation of electric cooperatives.

"We appreciate the World Bank's renewed engagement in power sector reform efforts in the country especially now that we are moving toward competitive generation in the WESM and the phased introduction of open access and competition at the distribution level," Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said.

"With our very limited resources, this assistance is indeed crucial in helping to achieve smooth transition to an effective functioning WESM by ensuring that the small electric cooperatives and distribution utility among other off-takers are financially credible counterparties. We anticipate that this reform would eventually provide cheaper and reliable electricity to end consumers and allow our industries to be more globally competitive," he added.

The grant aims to assist the government in the implementation of power sector reforms, in particular areas related to critical risk mitigation measures to ensure that the benefits of power sector reforms are maximized while risks are minimized. This would, in turn, contribute positively toward the improvement of the investment climate and would attract private sector investment for the power sector.

BSP remains confident on OFW inflows

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS EXpects inflows from overseas Filipino workers to grow by 10 percent—or still in line with its target—despite the slower expansion seen for the first time in 17 months last April.

"We're keeping the 10-percent target. We're still confident," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters.

This developed as the growth in OFW remittances slowed to a marginal 0.34 percent in April due to the shrinking number of workers deployed abroad. It was the first time since November 2004 that the growth for a single month fell below double-digit levels.

Tetangco said the cumulative January-to-April remittance level of $3.7 billion still posted a double-digit growth of 10.8 percent from a year ago.

Philip Wyatt, an analyst at UBS Securities, said the slowdown in remittances in April was mostly a seasonal dip.

"The main seasonal pattern is a fall in March to April and a rise November to December though they vary in magnitude," Wyatt said.

"Two factors acting as a drag on growth of remittances are the base in 2005, which was especially high, and the lower number of deployed overseas workers, which in January to April dropped by 2.7 percent," he said.

Wyatt said OFW inflows to the country would still likely hit $11-$12 billion by year's end from $10.7 billion in 2005.

Tetangco also said the BSP was striving to entice more OFW households to save part of their remittances in banks or engage in private businesses.

Based on the BSP's survey of households in Metro Manila, only 11 percent of OFW families attempt to invest in stocks or any private business but a larger 39 percent kept savings in banks and other depository institutions.

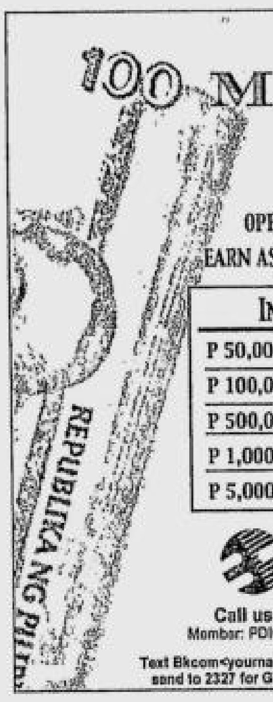
About 10 percent of households based in Metro Manila have at least one OFW and out of these families, 91.3 percent received remittances over the last 12 months. The survey also showed that 95.5 percent or nearly all of the households used part of the remittances to buy food and pay for other domestic expenditures.

"We've been coordinating with the banks, so the banks can offer financial products that the OFWs and their families can buy or participate in. That's for one group of OFWs that are not prepared to engage in business," Tetangco said.

"We want to see more OFW families putting a part of the remittances in banks or financial products. For those that don't have the inclination or the time to manage their investment, the bank will basically manage that for you. That's also good because there will be more resources for banks to invest in productive activities," the BSP chief said.

Tetangco said the banking system was also ready to support OFW families with entrepreneurial talent.

"We can tie this up with microfinance so let's say if somebody has a certain amount of capital but would need additional, he can go to a bank and borrow, either under a microfinance program or those with bigger requirements tap SME (small and medium enterprise) lending," Tetangco said.



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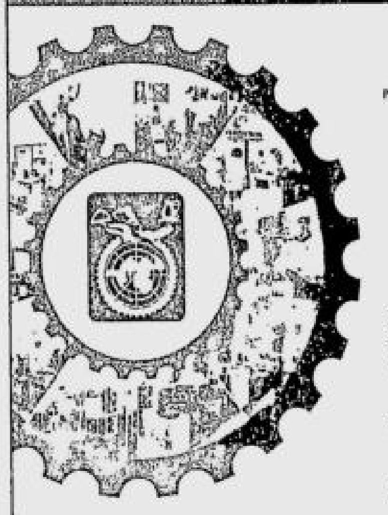

SEMINAR SCHEDULE
SEMINAR ROOM A (FREE ADMISSION)
JUNE 21, 2006
1:00-3:00 pm Best Energy Management Practices for Steam Systems, *Spirax Sarco Phils.*
3:30-5:30 pm CO2 Refrigerant for Industrial Refrigeration Seminar, *Engr. Cesar Luis Lim*
JUNE 22, 2006
10:00am-12:00nn Industrial Refrigeration Seminar with Emphasis on Liquid Overfeed System, *Engr. Cesar Luis Lim*
12:30-2:30 pm Savings Using Variable Frequency Drives, *Jupp & Company*
3:00-6:00 pm Thermal Energy Storage Systems Seminar, *Engr. Cesar Luis Lim*
JUNE 23, 2006
10:00-12:00 nn Product Presentation, *Schneider Electric Philippines, Inc.*
12:30-2:30 pm Hydrocracked Lubricant Technology, Engr. Johnson Lim, *Mechatronics*
4:00-6:00 pm Product Presentation, *Ensotech Systems Industries, Inc.*
ASHRAE SEMINAR ROOM B (Seminar Fee: Php 500 per topic)
A Special Seminar Series conducted in partnership with the American Society of Heating Refrigerating & Air conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)
JUNE 21, 2006
1:00-5:30 pm Air-Conditioning Cooling Load, *Engr. Rosendo C. Perez, Jr.*
JUNE 22, 2006
10:00am-12:00nn Air Conditioning Equipment Selection, *Engr. Luci Umson, Concepcion Carrier*
12:30-6:00 pm Psychrometrics, *Engr. Rosendo C. Perez, Jr.*
JUNE 23, 2006
10:00-12:00nn Pumps, *AMZEN*
12:30-2:30pm Fans & Blowers, Design and Construction, *Engr. Jason Tan, Niagara Industrial Equipment Corp*
3:00-6:00pm Kruger Fans Seminar
SEMINAR ROOM C (FREE ADMISSION)
JUNE 23, 2006
1:00-6:00pm Department of Agriculture Investment Forum

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INVITATION to PREQUALIFY for CONTRACT NO. ADB/OAS-2006/022
(Commissary Management Services)

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines, invites interested companies to apply for prequalification required in subsequent bidding exercise for the provision of commissary management services at ADB Headquarters Building, located at No. 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Philippines.
2. The Contractor shall perform the services with skilled personnel and necessary supervision, appropriate equipment to manage, operate and maintain the tax-exempt Commissary facility located within the ADB premises. The Contractor shall operate and manage the Commissary and conduct sales operations of various grocery items, frozen and chilled products, wines and spirits, tobacco and other products as directed by the ADB in accordance and compliance with the existing policies, instructions, standards and procedures to the operation of the ADB's Commissary, as may be established by the ADB from time to time.
3. Prequalification is open to firms and voluntarily formed joint ventures from eligible members of ADB.
4. Interested eligible applicants may request further information by calling, writing or faxing, the Procurement and Contracts Administration Section, Institutional Services Division, Office of Administration Services, Asian Development Bank at the contact address specified above starting from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
5. Prequalification documents may be obtained from the Head, Procurement and Contracts Administration Section, Institutional Services Division, Office of the Administrative Services, Room 1636 South, at the above address, from 26 June to 30 June 2006 on any working day, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., upon presentation of the receipt of payment in cash or manager's check of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Five Hundred (PhP500.00) at the ADB's Cash Room, Room G239W.
6. Two copies (marked "Original" and "Copy") of the applications should be submitted each in a sealed envelope marked "Application to Prequalify for the Commissary Management Services" addressed to the attention of "Head, Procurement and Contracts Administration Section, Institutional Services Division, Office of Administrative Services" and should reach ADB not later than 3:00 p.m. on 11 July 2006. ADB reserves the right to accept or reject late applications.
7. Applicants will be advised, in due course, of the result of the applications. All prequalified applicants will be contacted and issued the Bidding Document
8. This invitation does not entail any commitment on the part of ADB, either financial or otherwise. Any cost of preparation of prequalification documents shall be borne solely by the applicant.

CÉCILE L.H.F. GREGORY
Director, Institutional Services Division
Office of Administrative Services

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(PDI–June 22 & 23, 2006)

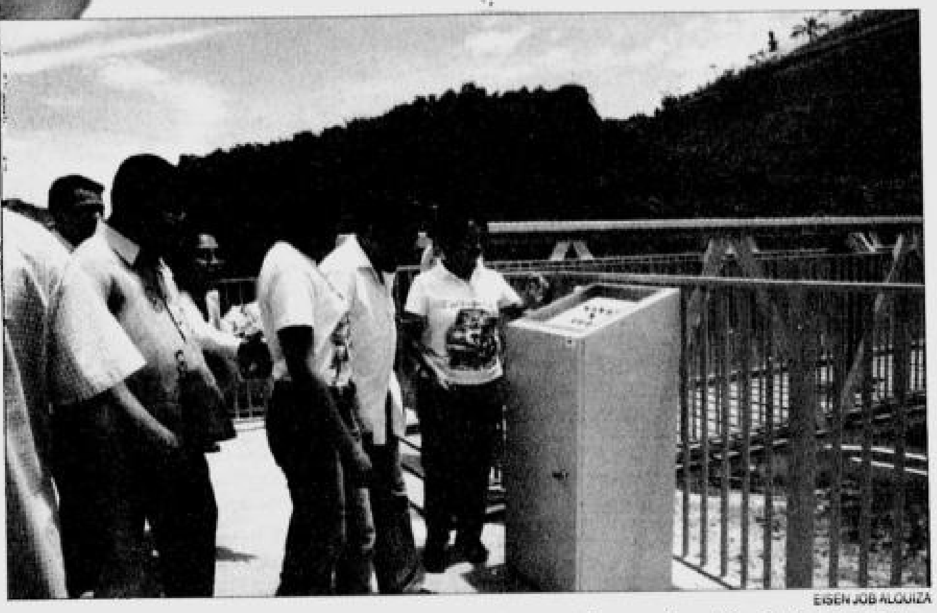
NIA Celebrates 43rd Anniversary

P25-B Irrigation Rehab Seen to Clinch RP Food Security

Eight months into his role as administrator of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Baltazar H. Usis is aggressive about the country's food security prospects. A hallmark of the Arroyo administration's agricultural program is self sufficiency in rice supply – an indicator of food security.

Usis is convinced this would be attained by 2009 as planned, with the rehabilitation of the country's major irrigation systems.

"Irrigation is a catalyst of agricultural development and it has a crucial role to play in seeing to it that the agriculture sector reaches its desired goal," he pointed out during his inauguration October last year and further noted that agricultural productivity continues to underpin the country's economic growth.



EISEN JOB ALQUIZA

TOP photo shows President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo at the recent inauguration of Can-Asujan Project in Cebu.

That conviction bears the zeal of an engineer who has spent decades working the field offices of NIA before assuming management roles in the agency.

"Everybody knows well that I've been rendering my service here almost the same length with NIA's existence. We know very well our jobs. We know very well our activities, so it is only a matter of sincere implementation and it is only a matter of dedicated strategies," he told his erstwhile peers.

His strategy – an ambitious one – entails the investment of P25 billion over the next five years on the rehabilitation of major national and communal irrigation systems throughout the country.

According to him, the plan would be the most practical and short-term response to increase productivity in rice farms.

"The lack of good irrigation system is a big factor why the country always falls short of its annual rice production target. Many of our CIS (communal irrigation systems) have deteriorated due to lack of funds for operation and maintenance, especially when these were devolved to the local government units," he said.

And there's the catch.

NIA data show that of the 3.126 million hectares (ha.) of total rice lands nationwide, only 49 percent or 1.402 million ha. have functioning irrigation systems, while about 1.724 million ha. rely primarily on rainwater for rice planting activities. Of the areas served by irrigation, about 368,075 ha. have deteriorated and in need of rehabilitation and/or restoration.

The reason is simply the lack of funds or delays in the release of funds – year after year.

According to NIA data, the government provides P1,126 per ha. for maintenance or a shortfall of P1,274 per ha. from the ideal budget of P2,400 per ha.

But Usis is undaunted.

The NIA has already received P500 million in funds from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to jumpstart the rehabilitation of some 8,317 ha. of irrigation systems this year.

The available fund accounts for only 12 percent of some P4 billion required to rehabilitate national irrigation systems (NIS) and CIS for the year alone.

Leaning on NIA regional, operations managers and department managers to improve collection efficiency, particularly in big regions such as 1, 2, 3, and 6 that account for around 70 percent of the agency's total irrigation service fee (ISF) collectibles.

By September this year, the target is to raise P515 million or 77.44 percent of back accounts and P227.6 million or 90.42 percent of current accounts due from farmers.

"One of the major concerns remains the financial viability of NIA and we will continuously address this – especially the measures to increase collection efficiency. Increasing dramatically our collection efficiency is the challenge we all have to work for. The success of our collection efforts largely depends on our aggressiveness, innovativeness, persistence and political will," Administrator Usis said.

Social Benefits of Irrigation

Local ownership of irrigation systems nationwide went into high gear in 2005. NIA reached close to 200,000 farmers last year, resulting in the organization of 67 more irrigators' associations (IAs) in 2005, of which 43 became registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The agency was also able to strengthen 1,028 existing IAs, through the conduct of training and workshops participated in by thousands of farmers nationwide.

This bodes well for the country's progress, as increasing local ownership ensures success and profitability in agriculture – which continues to drive economic growth.

"Dependence on government for operations and maintenance (O&M) has been a major reason for poor irrigation performance. Financial autonomy, with costs for O&M recovered from users, benefits the poor, as better performing schemes enable the poor to produce more.

"Modern, productive and well managed irrigation systems have a high rate of success, measured as returns to investment of 10 percent or better," the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) stressed during the 4th World Water Forum held in Mexico last March.

In fact, capacity building is key to sustainable water management, according to the IWMI. Integrated water resource management and long-term monitoring are likewise crucial, experts agreed during the global forum.

"We will always cherish how NIA took care of us in our formative years," said Danilo Ulbata, chairman of the Tamulcom Fisco Farmers' Cooperative, Leyte's three-time awardee for exemplary performance in management and operation of an irrigation system. Prior to its organization as a cooperative, Tamulcom existed as an IA for eight years. As an IA, it was extensively exposed to a series of orientation seminars and trainings, sectoral meetings and in-depth monitoring conducted by the NIA. In 2005, Tamulcom registered a collection efficiency of 114 percent in its current and back accounts on irrigation service fees. It has also become a profitable venture, with assets exceeding P200,000.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), based in Manila and a major multilateral funding source for the Philippines, has likewise documented the social benefits of irrigation. In its case study on the Kabulnan Irrigation and Area Development Project, which it funded with a $48-million loan, the ADB noted the project's positive impact.

Before it was implemented, 80 percent of the local population lived below the poverty line. Nine years later, with 76,000 having better access to irrigation, water, transportation, health and education services, crop yields almost doubled and transport costs went down drastically.

The project also alleviated the peace and order situation, being located in Maguindanao, which is part of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao and a conflict-ridden area.

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MESSAGE

NIA ADMINISTRATOR
BALTAZAR H. USIS

On the occasion of our 43rd anniversary, I commend the dedicated men and women of the National Irrigation Administration.

Our mandate is clear: to deliver efficient and swift service to our farmers. Our front liners, who directly attend to the needs of the farmers, are our field personnel and project implementers. In turn, we here at the central office make sure that our regional, project and provincial offices are able to deliver.

One of the major concerns remains the financial viability of NIA and we will continuously address this – especially the measures to increase collection efficiency. Increasing dramatically our collection efficiency is the challenge we all have to work for. The success of our collection efforts largely depends on our aggressiveness, innovativeness, persistence and political will.

> Our mandate is clear: to deliver efficient and swift service to our farmers

We will continue with what all the previous administrations have started. We will continue adding fine stones to the edifice of NIA for its betterment and development. We will continue serving the people with full commitment and dedication. We have learned from our mistakes in the past so we will handle all our duties and functions based on what we know is right and good for all.

Most importantly, with the full support of Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the National Irrigation Administration will attain its goal of efficient irrigation service, thus contributing to rice self-sufficiency of the country. In doing so, we will make the life of Juan dela Cruz satisfied and happy.

Mabuhay ang NIA!

NIA Facts & Figures

- In 2005, NIA pursued the implementation of 39 irrigation projects: 14 foreign-assisted, 21 locally-funded (including continuing activities and carry-over projects) and four inter-agency projects. Twelve are located in Luzon, eight in Visayas, six in Mindanao and 13 with subprojects in selected provinces nationwide.
- As of Dec. 31, 2005, the agency accomplished 56 percent of the targeted area of 18,883 ha. for generation or 10,539 ha. and 90 percent of 123, 557 ha. for rehabilitation or 110,865 ha.
- NIA now manages 199 national irrigation systems under 115 responsibility centers nationwide with a total service area of 695,774 ha. The service area increased by 5,535 ha. in 2005 from the previous year's area with the partial operation of the Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation System in Region 12 and the Bubunawan Irrigation System in Region 10. The total irrigated area was 972,692 ha. broken down into 476,450 ha. during the dry season (November 2004 to April 2005) and 496,242 ha. during the wet season (May 2005 to October 2005).
- As of Dec. 31, 2005, the total service area developed was 1,413,236 or 45 percent of the estimated potential irrigable area of 3,126,340 ha. Of this area, 695,774 ha. are under NIS, 543,262 in CIS and 174,200 in private irrigation systems. The remaining potential area to be developed is still 1,713,100 ha. The estimated potential irrigable area are those primarily devoted to rice and corn and up to three-percent slope.
- The funding requirement for the restoration of 128,205 ha. of NIS is about P7.69 billion, of which P1.54 billion would be needed on the first year and P3.077 billion each on the second and third years. To sustain the cumulative service area restored, about P2.8 billion would be needed for operation and maintenance (O&M) sustenance. While O&M sustenance for CIS is handled by the farmers, P14.4 billion would still be needed to restore various CIS throughout the country. Overall, to achieve the maximum support of NIA to the GMA Rice production program and attain rice self-sufficiency in year 2009, the total funding requirement is roughly P25 billion.

NIA-BHIP II ON THE ... SERVICE ROADS WITH A TOTAL DISTANCE OF 120 KMS.
PROV'L GOVERNMENT HEADED BY
HON. ERICO B. AUMENTADO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR
BALTAZAR H. USIS

The Bohol Irrigation Project, phase 2 of which started recently, is one of NIA's priorities.

MINOR SPONSORS

CHINA GEO-ENGINEERING CORP. ■ EDCOP ■ TOYO CONSTRUCTION

CalEnergy congratulates NIA on its 43rd anniversary

On behalf of CalEnergy International, it is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to the men and women of the National Irrigation Administration led by the Hohorable Baltazar H. Usis, on the occasion of its 43rd founding anniversary.

As an organization built on operational excellence, CalEnergy recognizes the same ideals practiced by NIA when our partnership was formed 11 years ago through the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Hydroelectric Project.

Throughout those years, we have witnessed how NIA has courageously performed its mandate to deliver efficient and swift service to the Filipino farmers. And for that, we are glad to be working hand-in-hand with NIA to help the Filipino farmers and their families raise the quality of their lives and at the same time boosting the performance of the agriculture sector.

CalEnergy's alliance with NIA started in 1995, when we collaborated to develop the Casecnan Multipurpose Project. The Project was completed in 2001, with CalEnergy operating the plant and NIA managing the irrigation facilities. Aside from generating 150 MW of hydroelectric power to the Luzon grid, the Project will irrigate up to 35,000 hectares of agricultural lands and is currently stabilizing water supply to 102,000 hectares of existing rice fields. Along with this Project, CalEnergy has also developed other energy sources in the country that are reliable, renewable, clean, indigenous and beneficial to the environment.

Beyond our partnership in the Casecnan Multipurpose Project, CalEnergy extended its support to NIA by sponsoring the annual Casecnan Awards for Outstanding Irrigators' Associations, which grants incentives to the best performing irrigators' associations (IAs) nationwide.

Together, we created the Casecnan Awards to recognize the remarkable performance, exemplary leadership and skillful management of IAs under the wing of NIA. These qualities should result to significant contributions promoting the development of their organizations, project implementation and sustainable cooperative growth. Motivating the IAs to strive for excellence will not only help them survive, it will also transform them into a strong, self-reliant organization built to last.

In this regard, let me also congratulate this year's awardees, IAs composed of highly skilled and motivated farmers, who are continuously improving their management skills and operational competence.

We have seen how the Casecnan Awards has vastly improved the performance of IAs in terms of membership, irrigation systems management, and financial capability. Because of this, we are making vast strides in realizing increased agricultural production and improving the lives of the Filipino farmers.

With your government's increased support to the agricultural sector, I am confident that NIA can help achieve the sector's productivity goals, one of which is to continue reducing rice imports and will ultimately result in self-sufficiency.

May NIA, CalEnergy, along with the irrigators and farmers, remain united so we can work together to advance the welfare of the Filipino people. If we continue working together, encouraging each other towards excellence, we can attain our goal of achieving economic growth and alleviating poverty in the country.

Please accept my warmest congratulations on NIA's 43 years of achievement and my best wishes for every success in the years to come.

Joseph Sullivan, President

ENERGY GROWS. From the irrigated fields of Central Luzon, to the machines milling the crops, to the rice served at every table, CalEnergy continuously enriches lives by providing the benefits of water and power. Its three geothermal plants in Leyte and the Casecnan multipurpose irrigation and hydroelectric plant in Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya, generate a combined 680 megawatts of power and deliver hundreds of million cubic meters of water that are crucial to meeting every farmer's basic needs. With power and water comes growth. With growth comes progress.

CAL**ENERGY**
INTERNATIONAL LTD.
A MIDAMERICAN ENERGY HOLDINGS COMPANY AFFILIATE

The power to enrich life.

Ayala shares offering moved to July 21

AYALA CORP. HAS DEFERRED ITS PROposed preferred shares offering to July 21 from July 18 as earlier set.

Ayala planned to raise P5.8 billion from the preferred shares offering.

Its offer period was likewise moved to July 10 to 14 from July 5 to 11.

Ayala managing director Ramon Opulencia said the adjustment was due to the expected increase in interest rates.

Such policy changes may have an impact on local interest rates.

"To ensure that the dividends on the preferred shares reflect as accurately as possible the prevailing market rates, Ayala Corp. has decided to adopt a revised timetable for the offering of the preferred shares," Opulencia said.

The PSE earlier approved Ayala's proposed listing of P5.8 billion worth of preferred shares, or up to 58 million preferred shares at P100 a share.

The funds to be raised would be used to pay down debt or finance working capital, sources had said.

The proposed public offer will consist of 28.5 million preferred shares representing 95 percent to be offered to domestic investors.

Up to 1.5 million preferred shares or 5 percent will be sold to brokers and the remaining 28 million will be allotted for oversubscriptions by local investors.

Ayala has tapped BPI Capital Corp., and The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. as joint issue managers and bookrunners. BPI Capital , First Metro Investment Corp., and HSBC will be joint lead underwriters while PCI Capital Corp. is a participating underwriter.

PETPlans wants out of pre-need business

Firm vows to continue paying claims

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED FIRM PETPLANS INC. IS GETTING out of the pre-need industry, saying it no longer makes sense to continue under the present regulatory framework of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) covering pre-need firms, company president Lorenzo T. Ocampo told the INQUIRER.

Ocampo said PETPlans would shift to mutual fund management.

He stressed that PETPlans was "liquid and that it would continue paying its plan holders."

"We are not going to run away from our responsibilities but the pre-need framework is not working. A mutual fund has a better chance at getting better returns," Ocampo said.

To satisfy legal requirements and pave the way for the proposed conversion of its trust fund into a mutual fund to be independently managed by a bank or an investment firm, Ocampo said PETPlans was filing its petition for rehabilitation with the Makati Regional Trial Court today.

Pending the approval of the petition for rehabilitation, PETPlans policy holders should continue to pay their premiums, otherwise their plans will lapse, Ocampo explained.

Under the plan, the firm sought the court's permission to convert all of its outstanding pre-need plans and contracts into an independently managed fund. This will be managed independently by a bank to assure plan holders that the trust fund is intact.

The company has trust fund assets worth P2.7 billion.

Also, the company asked the court that it be allowed to continue paying plan holders whose benefits were due pending the approval of the rehabilitation plan.

These payments will not prejudice other plan holders nor will these affect the value of the company's trust fund since the amount involved is not substantial and will not require liquidation of any assets of the trust fund.

PETPlans has 125,000 plan holders as of last year, consisting of holders of life, education and pension plans.

The company also intends to shift to operating financial "business hubs" such as those that will serve as a network selling life, non-life, health maintenance organization (HMO) and memorial park lots; offer money transfer, and parcel delivery services to overseas Filipino workers, and provide loans and credit card facilities.

A portion of the income from these new businesses will be contributed to the proposed mutual fund.

"Once outside the pre-need industry's restricted investment guidelines, the trust fund can take advantage of broader investment parameters that allow for better risk management, more realistic asset-liability matches and higher returns," Ocampo said.

In the proposed conversion of the trust fund into a mutual fund, plan holders will exchange their pre-need plans, contracts and insurance certificates for a "fund certificate," indicating a certain number of shares. The NAV will be equal to the maturity value of the plan.

Once the rehabilitation is completed, holders of fully paid fund certificates may opt to hold on to their investment or withdraw their money.

PETPlans is proposing to continue operating under a new name, PETLink Financial Corp.

Property projects rushed to meet IT sector need

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE CONTINUED BOOM IN THE call center industry has changed the landscape of the real estate sector, as developers respond to the rising demand for office space, according to an industry official.

Raffy David, a director of the Contact Center Association of the Philippines, yesterday said developers were rushing new projects, putting up new information technology buildings near schools and converting existing structures to suit call centers' needs.

Speaking at the closing day of the Call Center Conference and Expo at the Edsa Shangri-la hotel, David said new IT parks would be low-rise, about two to 10 stories, compared to the existing high-rise call center havens.

"The Philippine Economic Zone Authority's policy of lowering the floor area requirement for IT parks and buildings will give this trend a push in the next five years or so," said David, who is also a director of Pilipinas Teleserv Inc.

The developer of IT parks and buildings, as well as businesses that would set up shop in these structures, are qualified to tax holidays and fiscal and non-fiscal perks.

In the past, developers of IT parks needed at least five hectares of floor space to qualify for Peza incentives, but this was lowered to one hectare or 10,000 square meters.

As for IT buildings outside Metro Manila and Metro Cebu, the requirement was reduced to 2,000 sqm from 5,000 sqm.

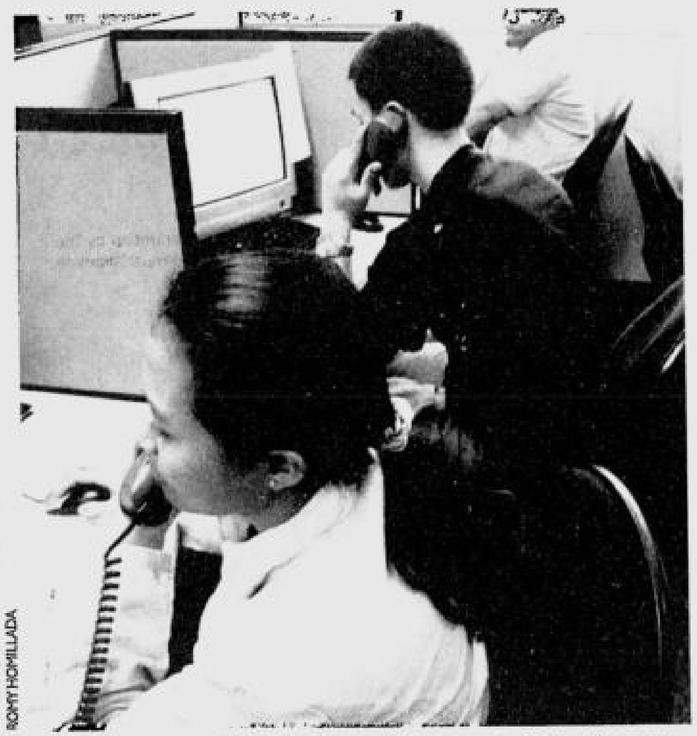
"IT buildings beside (university) campuses are also rising like the ones that Ayala Land is putting up near the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, and in Canlubang, Laguna," David said.

"A more interesting trend is the conversion of properties that were not originally intended for office use into ones suited for call centers and business process outsourcing firms," he added.

But a stranger trend, David said, was the leasing of mall space to call centers and the conversion of entire malls into call center and BPO structures.

He cited as an example SM's Mall of Asia where Dell rented a space and TeleTech was leasing a building nearby.

Warehouses and factories, too, are being converted into offices for call centers.


ROMY HOMILLADA

EVEN warehouses and factories are now being converted into call centers.

Industry data show that in the next two years, the supply of office space was expected to be at an all time high of around 210,000 sqm and 240,000 sqm, but still short of the projected demand.

In the same period, call centers would need between 150,000 sqm and 640,000 sqm. The increase in demand for office space is seen resulting in rent increases by 12 percent to 15 percent a year.

Japan property stocks slump on rate hike fears

SINGAPORE—JAPANESE PROPerty stocks slumped and the yen rose yesterday after the governor of Bank of Japan signaled the country's first rise in interest rates for six years, a move that could come as early as next month.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei average, which fell earlier, ended the day steady, while other Asian stock market indexes were mixed.

Hawkish comments by the head of the Bank of Japan, Toshihiko Fukui, helped the yen extend a recovery against the dollar to 114.65 per dollar and move away from a record low on Monday of 145.86 against the euro, to 144.76.

"Fukui's speech was a wake-up call to the market about how serious the BOJ is about wanting to normalize interest rates," said John Kyriakopoulos, currency strategist at National Australia Bank.

The 10-year Japanese government bond futures slumped in early trade to a five-week low before recovering some losses later. The yield on two-year bonds rose 1.505 basis points to 0.815 percent.

"Depending on stocks movements, we could see some buying in the near term, but on the whole, the market is headed lower as the possibility of a rate hike in July increases," said Hiroyoshi Sandaya, a Japanese government bond strategist at Goldman Sachs.

"Many investors haven't regained confidence after the recent sell-off. Prices are capped and liquidity is declining," said Hiroyuki Kikukawa, associate director at commodities trader Nihon Unicom Corp.

"People still don't want to hold lots of risk assets when stock prices are generally bearish."

Tokyo's Nikkei stock average closed 0.03 percent lower at 14,644.26.Reuters

BSP urged to help raise lending to SMEs

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE EXPORT INDUSTRY HAS appealed to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to help prop up lending to small and medium enterprises by narrowing opportunities that allow banks to circumvent the mandated lending to the sector.

Under the Magna Carta for SMEs, banks are required to lend 8 percent of their total loan portfolio to the sector. The BSP, however, made available several modes of alternative compliance.

"We suggest that the BSP review the extent of allowable substitution of government securities in compliance to the mandated lending to SMEs," Philippine Confederation of Exporters president Sergio Ortiz-Luis said in a paper presented during an environmental mapping forum with the BSP last week.

Among those considered compliance to the SME lending requirement are as follow: holdings of Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. (SBGFC) instruments, equity investments in and/or loans by BAP Credit Guarantee Corp., equity investments in the small business guarantee fund of Land Bank of the Philippines and other government financial institutions, and equity investments in venture capital corporations.

"The banks have billions of pesos in cash to lend. There are thousands of small companies craving to be given access to bank financing. The bottomline is, small businesses and the banks need each other if those idle funds are to be harnessed for productive activities," Ortiz-Luis said.

"When the financial crisis hit the Asian region, we claimed that the Philippines was the least hurt. In hindsight, our economy was the last to get out of it. We skirted the issue on SMEs while Thailand, Malaysia and South Korea gambled heavily on their SMEs," Ortiz-Luis said.

Ortiz-Luis said it would be "too ambitious" to address the credit needs of all the 64,791 small enterprises across the country in a year or two.

"Trying to reach a critical mass of SMEs in five years may realistically give the private banking system the chance to finally play a serious role in eradicating unemployment and spurring real growth in the Philippines," he said.

Having failed for almost a decade to convince the big private banks to open special credit packages tailored for small exporters, he said Philexport had tied up with the Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines and the Small Business Corp. on a pilot lending project for enterprise members of Philexport.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 21, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31.5	31.5	31	31	935,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44	44	42.5	43.5	2,540,000
China Banking Corp.	850	850	850	850	1,070
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	1,850,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	72	72.5	72	72.5	12,800
International Exch. Bank	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	79,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32	30.5	30.5	543,800
Philippine National Bank	32	32	32	32	31,000
Phil. Savings Bank	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	5,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17	17	17	17	2,500
Security Bank Corp.	42	42	41	41.5	379,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	42	42	42	42	20,200
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kim-Eng Fin. Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	2,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	29.5	31	29.5	31	10,100
Manulife Financial Corp.	1620	1705	1620	1705	250
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.90	0.99	190,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	210	210	210	210	50
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2030	2030	2030	2030	240
Ivantage Corp.	1.16	1.24	1.16	1.22	3,195,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	41.5	42.5	41.5	42.5	138,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	42.5	43.5	42.5	43.5	77,200
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	5,100
Manila Electric Co. B	20.75	20.75	20.25	20.75	119,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.9	7	6.9	7	3,231,000
Petron Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.4	3.55	3,177,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23.5	23	23.5	23,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	31	31	30.5	30.5	343,200
Pancake House Inc.	4.8	4.8	4.75	4.8	43,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	610,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	64	64.5	95,900
San Miguel Corp. B	69.5	71	69.5	71	94,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	2,580,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	40,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	110,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0675	0.0675	6,300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	5,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	8,000,000
Ayala Corp.	342.5	342.5	327.5	335	166,670
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	273,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.023	7,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.8	1.88	1.8	1.88	732,000
APC Group Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.007	66,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	470,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.98	7,930,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.65	3.5	3.55	7,158,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.4	1,023,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.12	0.125	0.12	0.12	1,300,000
SM Investments Corp.	207	209	207	209	51,250
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	30,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	200,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.25	11.25	10.25	11	11,132,700
Belle Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.02	956,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.6	1.62	52,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.9	1,004,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.57	5,790,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.26	1.28	1,516,000
Highlands Prime, Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	5,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.34	1.36	42,957,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	3,460,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	9.8	10	9.8	10	190,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.27	1,130,000
SM Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	30,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.3	7,669,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.065	600,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13.75	14	13.75	14	93,900
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	21,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.14	1,750,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	900	900	885	885	36,440
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.15	3.25	3.15	3.2	235,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1770	1770	1755	1770	60,480
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.19	0.16	0.19	26,970,000
Ionics Inc.	2.3	2.38	2.28	2.38	365,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.038	0.04	0.038	0.04	5,300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.046	0.049	0.046	0.049	1,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	45,000
Philweb Corp.	0.029	0.03	0.029	0.029	87,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.5	2.5	250,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13	13	13	13	35,800
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.8	231,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	13,000
Far Eastern University	1000	1000	1000	1000	270
Ipeople Inc	3	3	3	3	107,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2	2.04	1.98	2.02	297,000
Paxys Inc.	9.6	9.8	9.6	9.8	65,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	194,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.2	426,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	3,640,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	2,020,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	34,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.021	0.022	0.02	0.022	1,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	410,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.45	3.65	3.35	3.6	11,315,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.4	3.65	3.35	3.65	17,736,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	28	27	28	134,800
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	420,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.52	410,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	270,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	175,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.08	1.16	1.02	1.16	1,433,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.1	1.18	1.1	1.18	401,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	16	17.5	16	17.5	1,117,900
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	14.25	14.25	14	14	917,600

CURRENCIES

June 21, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.794597	1.000000	53.3130
Japan	Yen	0.006915	0.008703	0.4640
United Kingdom	Pound	1.463965	1.842400	98.2239
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.102313	0.128761	6.8646
Switzerland	Franc	0.641425	0.807233	43.0360
Canada	Dollar	0.711112	0.894935	47.7117
Singapore	Dollar	0.498899	0.627865	33.4734
Australia	Dollar	0.585770	0.737191	39.3019
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.108523	2.653576	141.4701
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.211881	0.266652	14.2160
Brunei	Dollar	0.497338	0.625900	33.3686
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000107	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020757	0.026123	1.3927
UAE	Dirham	0.216346	0.272272	14.5156
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.258500	67.0944
Argentina	Peso	0.257986	0.324675	17.3094
Brazil	Real	0.353076	0.444346	23.6894
Denmark	Kroner	0.134137	0.168811	8.9998
India	Rupee	0.017349	0.021834	1.1640
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216985	0.273075	14.5584
Mexico	New Peso	0.069427	0.087374	4.6582
New Zealand	Dollar	0.491949	0.619118	33.0070
Norway	Kroner	0.126564	0.159281	8.4917
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013197	0.016609	0.8855
South Africa	Rand	0.112279	0.141303	7.5333
Korea	Won	0.000830	0.001045	0.0557
Sweden	Kroner	0.108399	0.136420	7.2730
Syria	Pound	0.015307	0.019264	1.0270
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024382	0.030685	1.6359

Stocks hit . . .

From page B1

Losers outnumbered gainers 44 to 23, with 48 stocks unchanged. Volume was 1.18 billion shares worth P917.45 million.

Dealers said the result of Tuesday's treasury bond auction, which saw the yield on the five-year debt paper rise more than two percentage points to 10.625 percent, was a sign that the government was now willing to accept higher interest rates for its borrowings.

"A rising interest rate scenario means the cost of doing business would rise and personal consumption may decline. Both would only mean lower earnings for companies," said Jonathan Ravelas of Banco de Oro.

Some bargain buys late in the session limited the day's losses.

"These are good levels to start picking up bargains. We may see some rebound in the coming sessions," Ravelas said.

Property and banking shares continued to lead the market's retreat, still pounded by worries that higher interest rates would cut property sales and limit lending.

Top-traded Ayala Land fell 25 centavos to P11, while fellow property scrip Megaworld shed 30 centavos to P3.65.

Bank of the Philippine Islands slipped by a peso to 43.50. AFP

Republic of the Philippines
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, East Greenhills
Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila
Tel: (632) 726-0930 to 39 Website: www.sec.gov.ph

SEC MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 7
Series of 2006

SUBJECT: RULES ON SECURITIES BORROWING AND LENDING

WHEREAS, Section 2 of the Securities Regulation Code (SRC) declares that it is the policy of the State, among others, to promote the development of the Philippine capital market;

WHEREAS, Section 28 of the SRC provides that no person shall engage in the buying and selling of securities in the Philippines unless such person is registered to engage in said activity, by the Commission;

WHEREAS, securities borrowing and lending (SBL) is a form of securities business activity regulated by the Commission;

WHEREAS, Section 39 of the SRC mandates that the Commission registers and grants licenses, supervises and regulates organizations engaged in activities related to or connected with the securities business;

WHEREAS, Sections 33.2 (l) and 42.2 (e) of the SRC require the transparent, prompt and accurate clearance and settlement of all securities transactions;

WHEREAS, the framework for SBL facility must be institutionalized principally because it facilitates the settlement of securities transactions, broadens trading strategies for market participants and enhances liquidity in the market;

WHEREAS, the SRC likewise mandates the Commission to regulate the extension and maintenance of credit on securities;

WHEREAS, the SRC authorizes the Commission to issue rules and regulations to make effective the provisions of the SRC;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the foregoing provisions of the SRC, the Commission hereby adopts and issues the following rules to govern securities borrowing and lending activities.

Section 1. Coverage - These rules prescribe the requirements for the conduct of SBL transactions by brokers, dealers, banks, insurance companies and other persons or entities which may be engaged or involved in SBL transactions.

Section 2. Definition of Terms - The following terms shall have the meaning indicated, unless the context provides otherwise:

(a) **Beneficial Owner** refers to any person who, by way of any contract, arrangement or other means, is entitled to the rights of ownership over a security including the power to vote or to direct the voting of said security and the power to dispose of or to direct the disposition of said security. In the context of securities, this term is generally used to distinguish this party from the legal owner (*eg, a nominee)* who holds the securities for the beneficial owner.

(b) **Borrower** refers to a person who borrows securities from a lender's portfolio in order to support his trading activities.

(c) **Borrowing Period** or **Lending Period** refers to a specified period agreed upon by the parties during which the SBL transaction remains outstanding.

(d) **BIR** refers to the Bureau of Internal Revenue of the Republic of the Philippines.

(e) **Collateral** refers to cash or property with ascertainable value permitted under these rules to be used as security for borrowed securities for the period until the borrowed securities are returned or paid.

(f) **Commission** refers to the Securities and Exchange Commission of the Republic of the Philippines.

(g) **Direct Lender** refers to an entity that lends, by way of formal loan agreement, its own securities directly to the borrower and not through an intermediary or lending agent. The direct lender is either the beneficial owner or legal owner of the securities subject of loan.

(h) **Equivalent Securities** refer to securities of a similar type or class of issue bearing the same securities identification number and under the same tax regime as the borrowed securities that are transferred to the borrower.

(i) **Exchange** refers to any entity registered with the Commission as an exchange pursuant to the SRC.

(j) **Intermediary** refers to a third party institution that facilitates the SBL transaction.

(k) **Lender** means a person who lends securities from his own portfolio or from the assets of his clients by way of formal loan agreement. A lender may be a direct lender or a lending agent.

(l) **Lending Agent** means a juridical person which acts on behalf of a client with respect to the lending of securities.

(m) **Manufactured Dividend or Payment** refers to the dividend or coupon payment or any payment in respect to any corporate action of the issuer which is created to compensate a lender of securities or a borrower with respect to the collateral used for security, for any dividend or payment that accrues while the securities are on loan to the borrower or the collateral is held by the lender.

(n) **Margin Call** refers to the notice issued to the borrower to increase the amount of collateral to cover the amount of the outstanding borrowed securities.

(o) **Margin Release** refers to the act of releasing to the borrower of the excess collateral.

(p) **Mark-to-Market (MTM)** means the practice of periodically valuing borrowed securities and securities used as collateral based on their current market prices in order to reflect their current market value.

(q) **Master Securities Lending Agreement (MSLA)** refers to the agreement between the lender and the borrower that embodies the terms and conditions by which securities are lent or borrowed.

(r) **Securities Borrowing and Lending (SBL)** means the lending of securities from a lender's portfolio on a given date to a borrower's portfolio to support the borrower's trading activities with the commitment of the borrower to return or deliver said securities or equivalent to the lender on a determined future date. This is also referred to as a Securities Lending Transaction (**SLT**). Notwithstanding the use of expressions such as "borrow", "lend", "loan", "return", "redeliver", in SBL transactions, title to securities "borrowed" or "lent" shall pass from one party to another, and the party obtaining such title is obliged to redeliver or return equivalent securities.

(s) **Securities Custodian** refers to a juridical entity that performs the functions of safekeeping securities for clients, holding title to the securities as nominee, valuing securities, administering dividend, reporting and other services.

(t) **Securities Lending Authorization Agreement (SLAA)** refers to the contract between the beneficial owner of securities and his agent by which the former authorizes the latter to offer his securities for lending under the terms agreed between them.

Section 3. Modes of Conducting SBL: Lending Agent; Direct Lending – Securities lending may be conducted by the beneficial owner directly or through a lending agent; *Provided that*, the parties to a SBL transaction shall comply with the documentation, valuation, collateral management, settlement, record keeping, reporting, accounting standard and other requirements as prescribed by the Commission.

Securities lending may also be done using other methods such as through lending pool system, competitive auction, bid offer transaction or other schemes subject to the evaluation and approval of the Commission; *Provided that*, the parties to a SBL transaction shall comply with the required documentation, valuation, collateral management, settlement, record keeping, reporting, accounting standard and other requirements.

Section 4. Registration Requirements for Lending Agent. No person shall act as lending agent unless he is registered as such by the Commission.

An applicant for registration as lending agent must submit to the Commission the following:

a. Duly accomplished Application Form.
b. Board Resolution/ Authorization from applicant company/ firm allowing the securities lending agency service.
c. Organizational and functional charts of the securities lending unit.
d. Names and Curriculum Vitae of securities lending unit personnel.
e. Detailed description of automated Securities Lending System.
f. Manual containing risk management and internal control procedures.
g. Copy of *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* (BSP) license if the applicant is accredited securities custodian for banks and non bank financial institutions under BSP supervision.

In addition to the above, the applicant, upon filing of the application, must pay a registration fee in the amount of Php 50,000.00 and must furnish the Commission a copy each of the pro-forma MSLA and SLAA he intends to use, for record purposes.

The Commission from time to time may prescribe other requirements it may deem necessary. Such requirements shall be applicable to all lending agents including those authorized before the adoption thereof.

Section 5. Requirements for Securities Lending Unit Personnel – The securities lending unit personnel of the lending agent must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that its personnel possess functional knowledge and sufficient technical expertise in the operation of the securities lending system.

Section 6. Requirements for Securities Lending System – The securities lending system of a lending agent shall have the following minimum basic functions and capabilities:

a. Provide price quotation, trade matching and confirmation services.
b. Run a lender selection process if necessary.
c. Deliver the borrowed securities to the account of the borrower.
d. Receive collateral securities from borrower.
e. Perform daily valuation of borrowed and collateral securities.
f. Determine the adequacy of total collateral value against the total market value of borrowed securities outstanding for each borrower.
g. Issue margin calls or effect margin releases as appropriate.
h. Track corporate actions on borrowed and collateral securities, collect the benefits due them and distribute said benefits to the lender or borrower as the case maybe.
i. Execute loan and collateral return and recall processes.
j. Receive borrowed securities from the borrower on maturity date.
k. Return collateral to the borrower at the end of borrowing period or earlier.
l. Collect lending fee on agreed due date and distribute the same to the lender.
m. Inform borrower of the occurrence of default.
n. Report failed settlements.
o. Monitor foreign ownership of equity securities.

The lending agent may appoint a third party to perform any or all the foregoing functions; *Provided that*, the lending agent shall disclose in its application for registration, its engagement of a third party service provider; *Provided further that*, the lending agent shall be accountable for the acts, errors and omissions of such third party service provider.

Section 7. Requirements for Direct Lending – Only the following institutions may engage in direct lending: (1) domestic banks and branches of foreign banks; (2) investment houses; (3) investment companies; (4) insurance companies; (5) pension funds or retirement plans maintained by the Government of the Philippines or managed by a bank or other persons authorized by the *BSP* to engage in trust functions; (6) securities dealers, and; (7) other entities that may be declared by the Commission as qualified to engage in direct lending.

The direct lender may lend its own securities directly to a borrower; *Provided that*, the parties shall comply with the following:

1. The direct lender and borrower must execute an MSLA;

2. The direct lender must have a securities lending system which is capable of performing any or all of the functions enumerated under Section 6 hereof, and shall use the same to execute the SBL.

The direct lender may appoint a third party to perform any or all the functions enumerated under Section 6; *Provided that*, such engagement of a third party service provider shall be disclosed to the borrower prior to the execution of MSLA; *Provided further that*, the direct lender shall be accountable for the acts, errors and omissions of such third party service provider.

Section 8. Execution of MSLA - Prior to the execution of the first SBL transaction under a particular MSLA, the parties concerned shall execute an MSLA.

The MSLA shall contain, among others, provisions on the following:

a. The capacities in which the parties are acting.
b. Term of loan and manner of confirmation.
c. Mode of and requirements for delivery of borrowed securities.
d. Eligible collateral and delivery of collateral.
e. Statement that there is absolute transfer of title over the borrowed securities.
f. Collateral management procedures.
g. Valuation of securities.
h. Arrangement for dealing with manufactured dividend, payment, voting right and corporate action.
i. Return and recall of securities and consequences.
j. Events of default and remedies of parties.
k. Grounds for termination of loan and rights of parties upon termination.
l. Lending fee and other charges.
m. Representations and warranties of the parties.
n. Liability of parties.
o. Dispute resolution.

The MSLA must be assigned a reference number. If BIR registration is necessary, the MSLA must be registered with the BIR.

Section 9. Execution of SLAA – Prior to the delivery of securities by the beneficial owner to the agent, they shall execute an SLAA which must stipulate their respective rights and obligations on account of the lending of securities.

The SLAA shall contain, among others, provisions on the following:

a. Appointment of the agent by the beneficial owner and the acceptance by the agent of such appointment.
b. Scope of agent's authority with regard to administration of the borrowed securities and collateral.
c. Scope of agent's services and functions.
d. Qualified borrowers, investment managers, investment outlets, if any.
e. Eligible collateral and collateral management terms, if any.
f. Grounds and requirements for termination of agency.
g. Lending fees and other charges.
h. Representations and warranties.
i. Liability of the parties.
j. Dispute resolution.

Section 10. Loanable Securities – Only securities listed in an Exchange and securities issued by the Bureau of Treasury or the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* are eligible for lending under SBL transaction; *Provided that*, such securities are in electronic form or if certificated, the same must be in its electronic form at the time of SBL transaction and free from all liens and encumbrances.

The Commission may allow other securities for lending under SBL transaction.

Section 11. Delivery of Borrowed Securities - The borrowed securities shall be delivered to or deposited with the borrower simultaneous with or after the delivery of the collateral. The borrowed securities shall be deemed delivered by the lender on delivery to the borrower or upon the lender's direction in the instrument of transfer.

If the borrowed securities are being held by an agent, custodian, depository or within the clearing and settlement system, such borrowed securities shall be deemed delivered by the lender on the effective instruction to such agent, custodian, depository or operator of such clearing and settlement system which delivery shall result in such borrowed securities being held for the account of the borrower or by such other means as may be agreed.

In case of securities the title of which is registered in a computer-based system that provides for the recording and transfer of title by way of book entries, transfer of title shall take place in accordance with the rules of procedure of such system.

The parties shall execute all necessary documents and give all necessary instructions to ensure that the title, rights and interests in the borrowed securities shall pass from one party to the other.

Section 12. Eligible Collateral - For every borrowed security, the borrower shall provide the lender adequate collateral that may consist either of cash, equity or government securities, or a combination thereof, or other forms of collateral that may be allowed by the Commission.

The eligible collateral securities are those securities listed in an Exchange, securities issued by the Bureau of Treasury or the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*; *Provided that*, such securities are in electronic form or if certificated, the same must be in its electronic form at the time of SBL transaction and free from all liens and encumbrances.

Section 13. Delivery of Collateral - Cash collateral shall be delivered or deposited to the account of the lender prior to or simultaneous with the delivery of the borrowed securities.

The collateral securities shall likewise be delivered to or deposited with the lender prior to or simultaneous with the delivery of the borrowed securities. Collateral securities shall be deemed delivered by the borrower on delivery to the lender or upon the borrower's direction in the instrument of transfer.

If the collateral securities are being held by an agent, custodian, depository or within the clearing and settlement system, such collateral securities shall be deemed delivered by the borrower on the effective instruction to such agent, custodian, depository or operator of such clearing and settlement system which delivery shall result in such collateral securities being held for the account of the lender or by such other means as may be agreed.

In case of securities the title of which is registered in a computer based system that provides for the recording and transfer of title by way of book entries, transfer of title shall take place in accordance with the rules of procedure of such system.

If the parties intend that the title, rights and interests in the collateral securities shall pass from one party to the other, they shall execute all the necessary documents and give all necessary instructions to effect such transfer of title.

Section 14. Marking to Market; Valuation; Margin Call; Margin Release - The borrowed and collateral securities must be marked-to-market at least once daily based on the valuation method as indicated by the parties in the MSLA. In the absence of such agreement, valuation shall be based on current market price.

The value of the collateral must be maintained at levels agreed upon by parties; *Provided however, that*, in the absence of such agreement, the value of the collateral shall be maintained at an amount not less than the prescribed market value of the securities borrowed.

If the collateral or the borrowed securities are in the form of cash or government securities, the value of collateral must be maintained at an amount not less than 102% of the current market value of the securities borrowed.

If the collateral or the borrowed securities are in the form of equity securities, the value of collateral must be maintained at an amount not less than 105% of the current market value of the securities borrowed.

When the value of collateral becomes less than the current market value of the borrowed securities, a margin call must be issued and the borrower shall promptly increase the amount of collateral to at least the current market value of the borrowed securities.

However, when the value of collateral becomes greater than the current market value of the borrowed securities, the borrower may require the lender to release the collateral which is in excess of the current market value of the borrowed securities. The parties shall specify in the MSLA the threshold level above which the borrower may require the release of excess collateral.

The margining may be done on an aggregated or loan by loan basis; *Provided that*, the margining method to be adopted by the parties shall be specified in the MSLA.

Section 15. Reinvestment of Collateral – The cash collateral shall be invested in the manner consistent with the terms disclosed at the time of the execution of the MSLA. The terms of reinvestment of cash collateral shall include: (a) list of qualified investment outlets; (b) list of qualified financial institutions; (c) criteria for considering an investment; (d) procedures for selecting an investment; (e) agreement on fees; and, (f) period or term of investment that must be not longer than the term of the particular SBL transaction.

The reinvestment of cash collateral shall at all times comply with the applicable rules and regulations of the *BSP*. The Exchange, as regards their trading participants who are engaged in SBL transactions, may provide additional requirements on reinvestment of cash collateral or disallow the same.

Section 16. Substitution of Collateral – Within the borrowing period, the borrower may withdraw the collateral upon prior notice to the lender; *Provided that*, the borrower shall substitute the withdrawn collateral with another eligible collateral acceptable to the lender. In such case, the lender shall return to the borrower the original collateral as demanded by the borrower.

Section 17. Recall of Borrowed Securities – Within the borrowing period, the lender may recall the borrowed securities upon prior notice to the borrower in accordance with the standard settlement cycle for such securities. In such case, the borrower shall return the borrowed securities or their equivalent as demanded by the lender. On the other hand, the lender shall pay back the amount of cash collateral and return the collateral securities or their equivalent provided by the borrower.

The borrowed or collateral securities shall be deemed returned by one party on the delivery to the other or upon the party's direction in the instrument of transfer.

The causes by which the lender may recall the borrowed securities as well as the consequent rights and obligations of the parties on account of such recall shall be provided in the MSLA. The MSLA must also contain provisions that would ensure that recall rights are not exercised indiscriminately. However, the lender and the borrower may agree that the borrowed securities shall not be recalled during the borrowing period.

Section 18. Return of Borrowed Securities – Within the borrowing period, the borrower at any time may return the borrowed securities or their equivalent to the lender. When the borrowed securities or their equivalent have been returned, the lender shall pay back the amount of cash collateral and return the collateral securities or their equivalent provided by the borrower.

The consequent rights and obligations of the parties on account of such early return of borrowed securities shall be provided in the MSLA.

The borrowed or collateral securities shall be deemed returned by one party on delivery to the other or upon the party's direction in the instrument of transfer.

Section 19. Termination of Loan – At the end of the borrowing period, the borrower shall return the borrowed securities or their equivalent to the lender. On the other hand, the lender shall pay back the amount of cash collateral and return the collateral securities or their equivalent provided by the borrower.

The borrowed or collateral securities shall be deemed returned by one party on delivery to the other or upon the party's direction in the instrument of transfer,

Section 20. Default of Parties - The lender and borrower shall provide in the MSLA the circumstances constituting events of default on either party, their remedies and their consequent rights and obligations in case of default.

Section 21. Restriction on Foreigners – Foreigners shall not borrow from Filipinos equity securities of Philippine companies which are engaged in nationalized activities and whose foreign ownership is limited by the Constitution and existing laws unless there is in effect an established mechanism or process by which foreign ownership in said companies can be properly monitored so as to ensure that foreign equity remains within the constitutional and statutory limitations.

Lending agents and direct lenders shall ensure that SBL transactions entered into by foreigners are properly accounted for and that such foreigners agree to comply with these rules and applicable regulations.

Section 22. Documentation of SBL Transaction – Each SBL transaction shall be covered by a confirmation notice that specifies the details of the SBL transaction. The confirmation notice shall, among others, contain the following information: reference number, contract date, names of lender and borrower, type and quantity of borrowed securities, term, delivery date, face amount and market value of borrowed securities, collateral, MSLA reference number and settlement date.

Each party to the SBL transaction shall be entitled to receive a copy of such confirmation notice.

The Commission may allow other forms of confirmation notice and the information to be included therein.

Section 23. Record Keeping and Reporting — Lending agents and direct lenders shall maintain SBL ledgers, whether in manual or electronic form, that must be kept up-to-date and must contain the full and complete details of all SBL transactions.

The ledgers shall contain data such as the names of lender and borrower, tax information numbers of parties, contract date, type and quantity of borrowed securities, term, delivery date, face amount and market value of borrowed securities, collateral, MSLA reference number, settlement date, returned and unreturned borrowed securities and such other data the Commission may deem necessary.

Lending agents and direct lenders may also maintain other books and records containing details of their SBL transactions.

The ledgers, books and records pertaining to SBL transactions shall be subject to periodic or special examinations by examiners and other authorized representatives of the Commission. These ledgers, books and records shall be maintained in accordance with Section 52 of the SRC.

Lending agents and direct lenders shall submit to the Commission a bi-annual Summary Report of their SBL transactions within thirty (30) days after the end of the covered period.

The Commission may allow a different manner of compliance with the record keeping and reporting requirements prescribed in these rules taking into account the different modes of conducting SBL.

Section 24. Authority of the Exchange – The Exchanges licensed by the Commission to operate may design and adopt their own SBL programs and prescribe their own rules to govern the securities borrowing and lending activities of their trading participants; *Provided that*, said SBL programs and rules shall be consistent with the regulations herein set forth and approved by the Commission.

Trading participants of an Exchange shall conduct their SBL transactions in accordance with the rules of the Exchange concerned.

Section 25. Compliance With BIR Regulations – For an SBL transaction to qualify for tax exemption, the parties thereto must comply with the requirements imposed by the BIR under the applicable revenue regulations.

Section 26. Prohibition and Penalties - The Commission may disallow any securities from being lent or borrowed, limit the ability of borrowers to borrow eligible securities or impose additional restrictions on borrowers it may deem necessary for the protection of investors.

Any person who violates any provision of these rules shall be penalized as follows:

VIOLATION	AMOUNT OF FINE
1st Violation	Php 20,000 00 for every order/transaction or twice the amount of order/transaction, whichever is higher.
2nd Violation	Php 30,000 00 for every order/transaction or twice the amount of order/transaction, whichever is higher
3rd & Subsequent Violations	Php 50,000 00 for every order/transaction or twice the amount of order/transaction, whichever is higher.

The imposition of the monetary penalty shall not prejudice the filing of administrative and criminal charges as may be warranted by circumstances against persons responsible for the violation.

Section 27. Effectivity - These rules shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Mandaluyong City, June 9, 2006.

For the Commission:

(Sgd.) FE B. BARIN
Chairperson

(PDI–June 22, 2006)

Our beloved Mother

PACITA OSORIO NG

peacefully joined her Creator and husband Joseph Henry Ng
on June 19, 2006 at the age of 85.

We, her children: Josephine and Rogato, Peter and Jenny, Christine and Timothy,
Mary June and Joseph, Linda and Winston

and grandchildren: Russ, Ryan and Julie; Joanne, Peter Henri and Jennifer,
Kevin, Christopher and Candice; Jeremy, Jonathan and Adrienne; and Matthew

request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Capilla Del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio Parish,
McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.
Interment will be on Sunday, June 25, 2006 at the Manila Memorial Park,
Sucat, Parañaque after the 9 o'clock A.M. mass.

*In lieu of flowers, we will be accepting donations for the rebuilding
of St. Alphonsus De Liguori Church in Magallanes Village, Makati City.*

IN LOVING MEMORY

*On the 10th Death Anniversary of our beloved
"DADDY"*

*10 years ago you left us
10 years after we still miss you
And we still love you
Every bit as much as the day you went away.*

*"You were my strength when I was weak
You were my voice when I couldn't speak
You were my eyes when I couldn't see
You saw the best there was in me
I am everything I am
Because you loved me."*

FAUSTINO S. LAGBAO

February 15, 1922 – June 22, 1996

His loving wife, **Fe**; children, **Flory & Trygve**, **Fides & Chito**, **Freddie & Tina**, and **Rico**; grandchildren, **Jhonjee**, **JC**, **Niko**, **Christine**, **Mikkel**, **Janie**, **Monica**, **Christopher**, **Markie** and **Sam** and other family members request all readers to offer a prayer for him.

Masses will be offered today at the following churches:

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, *Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati*	6:00 AM
Holy Trinity Parish, *Balic-Balic, Sampaloc, Manila*	6:30 AM
Santuario De San Jose, *Greenhills, Mandaluyong*	7:15 AM
Lourdes Church, *Quezon City*	7:30 AM
Sto. Domingo Church, *Quezon City*	7:30 AM
Christ the King Parish, *Greenmeadows, Q. C.*	6:00 PM

Dr. Jose G. Crisostomo

of Imus, Cavite

U.P. College of Medicine Class 1942

*died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
on June 20, 2006 at the age of 88.*

His wife, **Caring**; children, **Grace** (†) and **Art Flores**, **Millie** and **Royce Reyes**, **Jean** and **Jim Pollock**, **Pinky** and **Rene Hernandez**, **Jose Jr.** and **Yasmin** and **Pete**; grandchildren **Addi**, **Arjay**, **Kandi** and **Andi Flores**, **Toni** and **Bobbie Reyes**, **Julia** and **Erica Pollock**, **Dindin**, **Jello** and **Ariel Hernandez**, **Tommy**, **Dana**, **Mikki**, and **Risa Crisostomo**, and **Jaycee Crisostomo**, relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence at 143 Gen. Satorre Street, Imus, Cavite.

Interment will be on Sunday, June 25, 2006 at the Imus Cemetery after the celebration of the Holy Mass at the Imus Cathedral at 2:15 p.m.

Dedicated doctor, civic leader, avid sportsman, beloved Tatay.

GUILLERMO ANGELES GUINGON

(MEMENG)

**Former Manila Fireman & LTO MNA Inspector
(February 10, 1923 - June 19, 2006)**

Peacefully joined our Lord at the age of 83.

His loving wife **Catalina**; children **Rey** and **Ellen**, **Olive** and **Nemy**, **Bong** and **Lorna**, **Rick** and **Lucy**, **Alice**, **Lady** and **Bobot** and **Hel**; surviving brother **Bert** and **Remi** and sisters **Marina** and **Lydia**; grandchildren **Ron**, **Cathrice**, **Giljo**, **Ryan**, **Andrew**, and **Blen**, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel B of La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on June 24, 2006 at Calaba Catholic Cemetery, Calaba, San Isidro, Nueva Ecija after the 10:00 a.m. Mass at the Calaba Holy Rosary Parish Church.

In Loving Memory

EUGENIO R. NADA

On his 1st Death Anniversary on June 22, 2006

His wife, Teodora, children, Alberto, Aldalyn and Jimmy Bere, and Ramuel and Mona Nada, grandchildren, Carla Angelica, Carla Camille, James Christian, Julia Alexandra and Jan Uriel invite their relatives, friends and readers to remember him in their prayers.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord." — 2 Corinthians 5:8

The Missionary Sisters
Servants of the Holy Spirit
Announce the death of

SISTER LAETISSIMA, S.Sp.S.

(HILARIA S. LEONES)

*on June 21, 2006 at the age of 89.
at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Sta. Mesa, Manila.*

Mass of the Resurrection will be offered on
June 22, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.
At the Convent of the Holy Spirit
8 Poinsettia Road, Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the Christ the King Cemetery,
E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City.

We design obituaries for free.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

Please be advised that the annual meeting of the stockholders of **ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.** (the "Corporation") will be held on **July 25, 2006, Tuesday, at 10:00 a.m.** at the Multi-Purpose Hall, 4th Floor, Asian Hospital and Medical Center, 2205 Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, with the following agenda:

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Certification of Notice and Quorum
III. Chairman's Message to the Stockholders
IV. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on October 20, 2005
V. Presentation of the Report of the President and Chief Executive Officer
VI. Presentation of the Audited Financial Statements of the Corporation for the Year Ended 2005
VII. Ratification of the Corporate Acts of the Board of Directors since September 15, 2005
VIII. Approval of the Amendment of Article IV, Section 7 of the Amended By-Laws of the Corporation
IX. Election of Directors for 2006 to 2007
X. Appointment of External Auditors
XI. Adjournment

Stockholders who may not be able to attend the aforesaid meeting in person but wish to participate through a proxy may send a Proxy Instrument to the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. of July 18, 2006, at the following address:

VICENTE D. GEROCHI IV
ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.
c/o 3rd Floor, SSHG Law Centre
105 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CORPORATION IS NOT SOLICITING PROXIES.

With respect to the election of directors (Item VIII of the Agenda), stockholders who wish to nominate candidates for directors, including independent directors, must submit their nominations to the Nomination Committee at the following address not later than 5:00 p.m. of June 23, 2006:

THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ASIAN HOSPITAL, INC.
4th Floor, Asian Hospital and Medical Center
2205 Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City
Alabang, Muntinlupa City
Fax No. 876-5710

All nominations should include (i) the signature of the nominating stockholder, (ii) acceptance and conformity by the nominee, (iii) *curriculum vitae* of the nominee, (iv) a statement that the nominee has all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications as set forth in the Corporation's Manual on Corporate Governance, Section 38 of the Securities Regulation Code ("SRC"), SRC Rule 38, SEC Memorandum Circular No. 02-02 dated April 5, 2002 and SEC Memorandum Circular No. 16-02 dated November 28, 2002, (v) information on the relationship of the nominee to the stockholder submitting the nomination, and (vi) all relevant information about the nominee's qualifications.

June 16, 2006.

VICENTE D. GEROCHI IV
Corporate Secretary

(PDI – June 22, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Makati City

ELENA DE LUNA,
Petitioner,
- versus -
NENA ZAMORA,
Respondent,
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Intervenor,
x--------------------------------x

SSC CASE NO. 2-16367-06

SUMMONS

To: MADAM NENA ZAMORA

GREETINGS:

You are hereby required to file within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this Summons with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission, 12th Floor, SSS (Makati) Bldg., 6782 Ayala Avenue corner Rufino Street, Makati City, your Answer to the petition filed by ELENA DE LUNA, which in substance claims that being the legal wife, she is the rightful beneficiary to the benefit accruing from the death of SSS member VICENTE DELA CRUZ DE LUNA.

You are further required to serve a copy of your Answer upon the petitioner with address at 0769 Veronica Street, Ma. Lourdes, Tabang, Plaridel, Bulacan, and upon public respondent SSS thru the Senior Vice-President of the Legal and Collection, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

If you fail to answer within the time prescribed above, the Hearing Commissioner, may upon motion of the petitioner or motu-proprio, declare you in default and shall forthwith proceed to receive the petitioner's evidence ex-parte and thereafter recommend to the Commission either the granting or denial of the petition as the evidence may warrant.

SO ORDERED.

Makati City, Philippines, June 8, 2006.

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI - June 22, 2006)

OBITUARIES

JOVENCIO L. VALEÑA, JR.

of Calauag, Quezon

In Peace and Grace joined his Creator
on June 19, 2006 at the age of 43.

His bereaved wife **LEA**; children **CHLOE & KEENA**, parents **Dr. JOVENCIO L. VALEÑA, Sr.** (†) & **NORMA L. VALEÑA**; brothers, sisters, nephews & nieces request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at their residence in Calauag, Quezon.

Interment will be on June 24, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at Calauag Municipal Cemetery.

WE DESIGN OBITUARIES FOR FREE

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
(Republic of the Philippines)
TANGGAPAN NG PANGULO
(Office of the President)
TANGGAPAN NG SWEEPSTAKES PANGKAWANGGAWA NG PILIPINAS
PHILIPPINE CHARITY SWEEPSTAKES OFFICES
PCSO Complex, E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Q.C., Philippines P.O. Box 141

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply & Delivery of New PCSO Instant Sweepstakes Tickets

1. The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) intends to apply the sum of Forty Million Pesos (Php 40,000,000.00) that serves as the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of the project. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PCSO now invites Bids from eligible suppliers for the supply and delivery of 50,000,000 Shares of New PCSO Instant Sweepstakes Tickets including promotional advertising and distribution of tickets, local custom duties & taxes, broker's charges & other fees due to the Government. Delivery of GOODS shall be for a period of 100 calendar days from receipt of signed contract, executed working papers and executed letter of credit. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. The procurement will be conducted through open competitive procedures specified under the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the said law. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB). The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *BAC Secretariat* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm.*
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of *Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00)* in **CASH**. *The date of issuance of Bid Documents will be from June 21, 2006 until July 4, 2006.* The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PCSO will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on ***July 11, 2006*** at ***9:30 a.m.*** at the *PCSO Executive Lounge, 4th floor Main Building, PCSO Complex, E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City.*
7. All Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted and will be accepted at the address below **on or before *10:00 a.m. of July 24, 2006*.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security, with the following schedule: (Late Bids shall not be accepted).

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, managers check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%) of Php 400,000.00
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half percent (1 1/2%) or Php 600,000.00

8. Bid opening shall be on ***July 24, 2006 at 10:30 a.m.*** at the ***PCSO Executive Lounge, 4th floor Main Building, PCSO Complex, E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City.*** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. PCSO reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Note The abovementioned time shall be based on the clock located at the Executive Lounge, 4th Floor, Main Building, PCSO Complex, E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City.

HON. ROSARIO C. URIARTE
Vice-Chairman and General Manager
Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO)
3rd Floor, Office of the GM
PCSO Complex, E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City

(sgd) ROSARIO C. URIARTE

(PDI – June 22 & 28, 2006)

PANGASINAN III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(PANELCO III)
Nancayasan, Urdaneta City
Tel. No. (075) 5682413; 5682402

INVITATION TO BID

The Pangasinan III Electric Cooperative, Inc. (PANELCO III), in compliance with the guidelines of the Energy Regulatory Commission, invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders to supply a 15.50 megawatt (MW) energy requirement of the PANELCO III franchise area with the option to increase/decrease commencing in 2011. Due to the impending power shortages indicated in the Department of Energy's (DOE) Power Development Plan (PDP), preference will be given to new and clean generation capacity built within the PANELCO III franchise area.

The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the eligible Bidder or the authorized representative from PANELCO III Main Office, McArthur Hiway, Nancayasan, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan, Philippines beginning July 3, 2006. A Pre-bid Conference will be conducted at PANELCO III Board Room at 2:00 p.m. on July 12, 2006.

Sealed proposals shall be received by the PANELCO III-PBAC at PANELCO III Main Office on or before 2:00 p.m., July 26, 2006 at which time and place said proposal will be opened and read in the presence of Bidders or Bidders' Representatives who choose to attend. Late submission will not be accepted.

PANELCO III hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the cooperative.

Noted by:

(Sgd.) Ms. **NERI F. POLICINA**
General Manager
PANELCO III

(Sgd.) Engr. **DINDO S. COLLADO**
ESD Manager
PBAC Chairman

(PDI--June 21 & 22, 2006)

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

INVITATION TO BID

Being offered for sale through public bidding, as one whole lot and on an "as-is, where-is" basis, are seven (7) contiguous parcels of land with improvements, covered by various Transfer Certificates of Title (TCTs), with a total area of approximately 14.319 hectares for P143,654,000.00, located at Barrio Makiling, Calamba, Laguna, formerly belonging to Unisol Industries and Manufacturing Corporation (UNISOL).

All offers shall be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of other bidders on 06 July 2006, at 3:00 p.m. at the PMO Conference Room, 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may avail of the Asset Specific Bidding Rules (ASBR) and Asset Specific Bidding Form (ASBF) for a nominal fee of PhP500.00 from the PMO Marketing Department, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

For more information, please call Mr. John F. Baldemor of the PMO Marketing Department at 817-6331 / 817-8762

(PDI--June 21, 22 & 23, 2006)

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TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date : June 12, 2006
Loan No.: CALYON
Contract No.: Sp06.NPTBP.Vt-0073

1. The ***National Power Corporation (NPC)*** has received a loan from the ***Buyer's Credit Facility arranged by CALYON through a Master Credit Arrangement*** for ***Northern Panay Project*** and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract ***Survey, Design, Supply of Materials/Equipment and Erection/Installation and Commissioning of Northern Panay 138/69kV Transmission Backbone Project.***

   Bidders if not a manufacturer shall purchase the equipment and materials from eligible source countries listed in the Calyon's Buyer's Credit Facility (United States, Austria, Belgium, England, Denmark, South Korea, Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland) and all expenditures for the plant and equipment mader under the Contract will be limited to such plant and equipment.
2. The ***National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)*** administering the implementation of the said project, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the:

   Survey, Design, Supply of Materials/Equipment and Erection/Installation and Commissioning of Northern Panay 138/69kV Transmission Backbone Project.
3. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents at the ***Office of the Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department****, Ground Floor, Power Center, National Transmission Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Telephone No.: 981-2212, 981-2213, 981-4652; Telefax No.: 921-23-08.*
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting June 14, 2006 upon submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***Forty Thousand Pesos (PHP 40,000.00).***
5. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2)-sealed envelopes, one (1) containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially only the technical proposals will be opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified bidders or which are not substantially responsive will be rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals that have been submitted by qualified bidders are discussed with the bidders and the bidders are requested for full compliance. The bidders may or may not submit a supplementary price proposal, which contain the changes in price resulting from the discussed changes in the technical proposals. The original price proposal and the supplementary price proposal are opened simultaneously in public.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of:

   One Hundred Seventy Six Thousand Two Hundred Seven US Dollars (US$176,207.00)

   The bid security must be included in the technical proposal.

   Pre-bid Conference shall be conducted on July 25, 2006.

   The deadline for the submission of bids will be on August 12, 2006 at 1:30 P.M. at the aforementioned address. Late submissions will be rejected.
7. The technical proposals together with the bid security will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the evaluation of the technical proposals.
9. The total contract duration for the project is **450 calendar days.**
10. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any or all Bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
11. All communications shall be addressed to the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee at aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **GUILLERMO R. REDOBLADO**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – June 15, 22 & 29, 2006)

PNOC

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO. Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

GENERAL SERVICES CONTRACT FOR
BACMAN GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION FIELD (BGPF)
EDC 06-061

The approved project cost is P9,722,789.04 to be charged against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is Two (2) years.

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, Fort Bonifacio (c/o N. P. Calling) starting **June 15, 2006 between 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: One Thousand (P1,000.00).**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **June 22, 2006, 9:30 AM** at PNOC-EDC BGPF Admin Complex, Bonga, Sorsogon. Site inspection will follow thereafter

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. on July 5, 2006 (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time)** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI–June 15 & 22, 2006)

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PTAA shooting contest postpone

THE PHILIPPINE TRAVEL AGENCIES ASSOciation (PTAA) together with the City of Manila headed by Mayor Jose L. Atienza, Jr. and Manila Sports Council chairman "Ali" Atienza, the Presidential Assistant for Youth and Sports announce the postponement of PTAA / ACCEL 3-Point and Free Throw shooting contest to July 1, 1-10 p.m. at the San Andres gym in Malate, Manila.

On behalf of the PTAA led by its President Jose C. Clemente III, the sports and fellowship committee Chairman Clarence Aytona opens the invitation to its members and to the public.

Registration fee of P150 per category (free throw and 3-point) gives you a chance to win cash prizes: P5,000 for the winner, P3,000 for the second placer and P2,000 for the third placer.

Five hundred participants will be accommodated on a "first come first paid basis" on June 29, 2006. For more details please call the PTAA Secretariat at 552-0026 -28, 0906-472-0370 or 0927-474-5271.

Other sponsors include China Airlines, Lufthansa, British Airways, Asian Spirit, Duty Free, Skynet Travel, Asiana, Cebu Pacific, Macau Government Tourist Office, and Philippine Airlines.

More Classified Ads:
ADB on Page B3,
Transco on A9 &
Supreme Court on A17

BUSINESS

Naia 3 to move forward once gov't pays up

Payment of P3B to bolster ownership claim on terminal project

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE able to start work on the mothballed Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3 to make it ready for operations once initial compensation is paid to its builders.

According to the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), the payment of the P3 billion as ordered by the Pasay City Regional Trial Court would facilitate the opening of the controversial airport terminal project, which has been bogged down by ownership and compensation issues, especially if it strengthens the government's claim over the facility.

"If the decision gives the government absolute writ of possession, it will hasten the opening as MIAA will be able to exercise the act of ownership such as, but not limited to, issuing lease contracts to airlines, doing invasive tests, completing unfinished work, etc.," MIAA general manager Alfonso Cusi said in a phone interview.

He did not, however, commit to a specific launch date for Terminal 3. Other government officials familiar with the project said the targeted opening date of "mid 2007" stands, despite recent developments on the legal front.

Earlier this week, a Pasay court judge denied the government's petition to nullify its earlier order for the payment of an initial P3 billion to Philippine International Air Terminal Co. (Piatco), the builder of the facility.

In his ruling, Judge Jesus Mupas of Branch 117 denied the motion filed by the Office of the Solicitor General on behalf of the government.

The motion was filed after the mysterious collapse of a section of the Terminal 3's ceiling last March. The solicitor general said the incident showed that paying Piatco would be "unjust and inequitable."

The Pasay judge rejected the motion and affirmed the right of the builder to just compensation from the government.

Another state official familiar with the project said the payment of the P3 billion would remove a crucial stumbling block to the completion of the project.

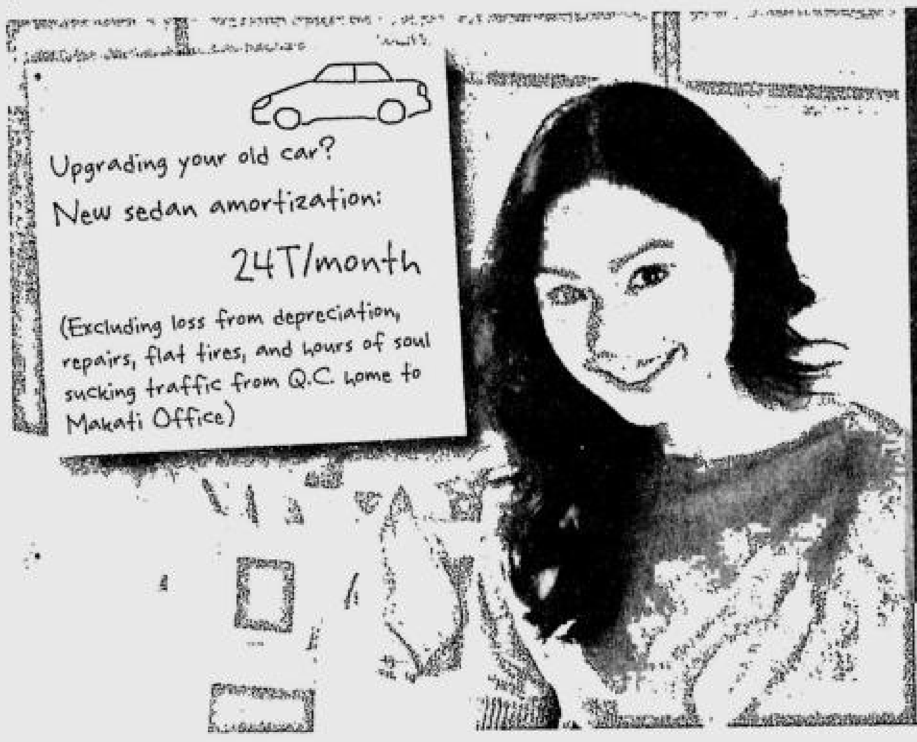
"The partial payment of P3 billion will establish the ownership and possession of the government on Terminal 3 and will address the concerns of Takenaka and airline companies as to the government's claim of ownership," the official said, requesting anonymity.

He was referring to Japanese contractor Takenaka Corp. which was responsible for building the terminal. It has so far refused to complete the remaining 2 percent of the structure pending additional compensation.

"Both Takenaka and airline companies were hesitant to [enter into] contracts with MIAA because of that ownership issue," the official said.

He explained that the government's main motive in asking the Pasay court to reconsider its earlier order was concern over which party would benefit from the funds, which currently sits in an escrow account with Land Bank of the Philippines.

"The only concern of the government on the P3-billion payment is the distribution of the money," he said. "The government wanted the money to be used to pay Takenaka and other subcontractors first, and not to Piatco."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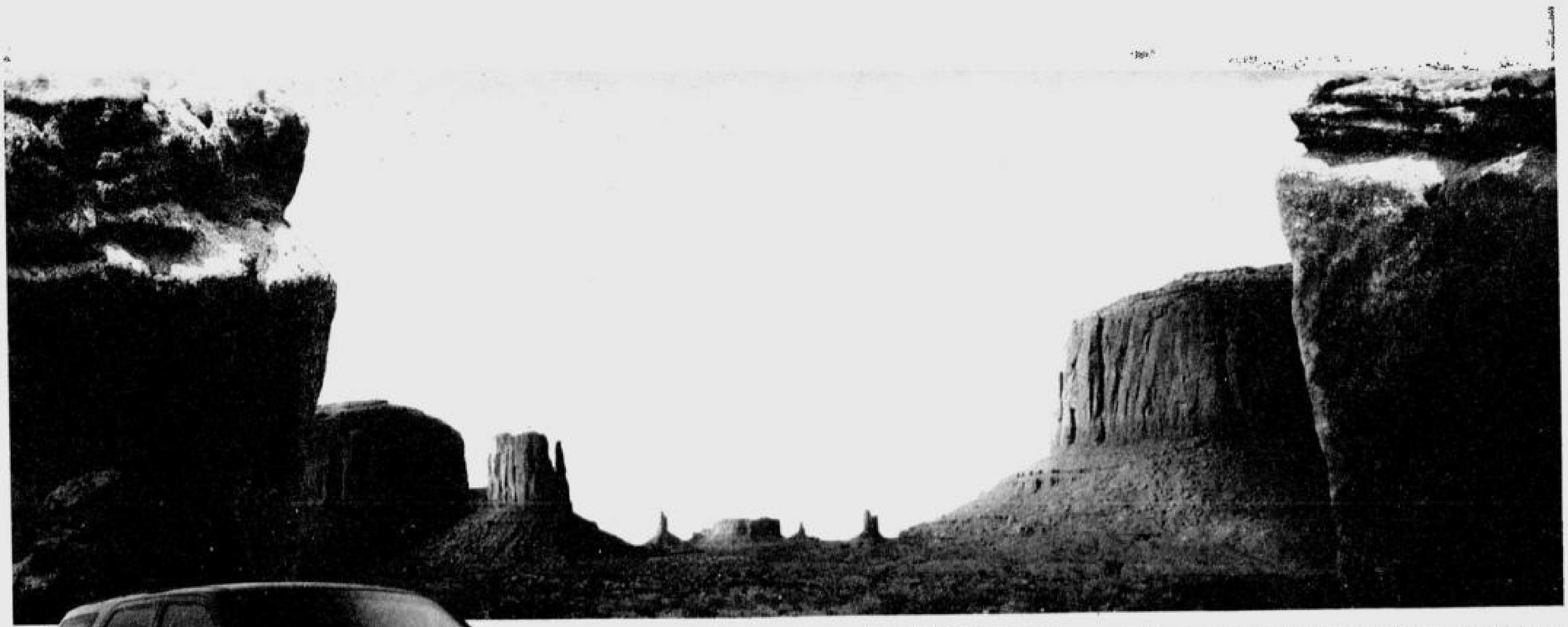

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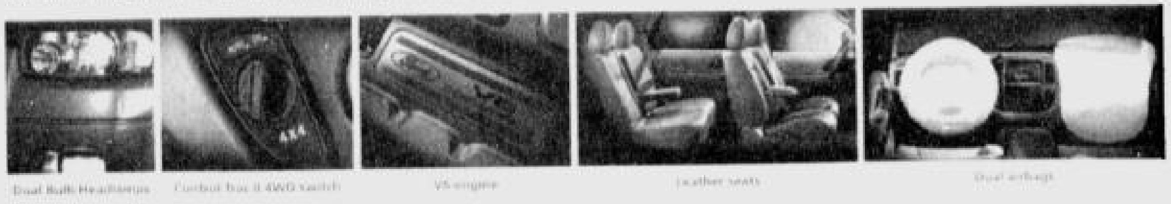
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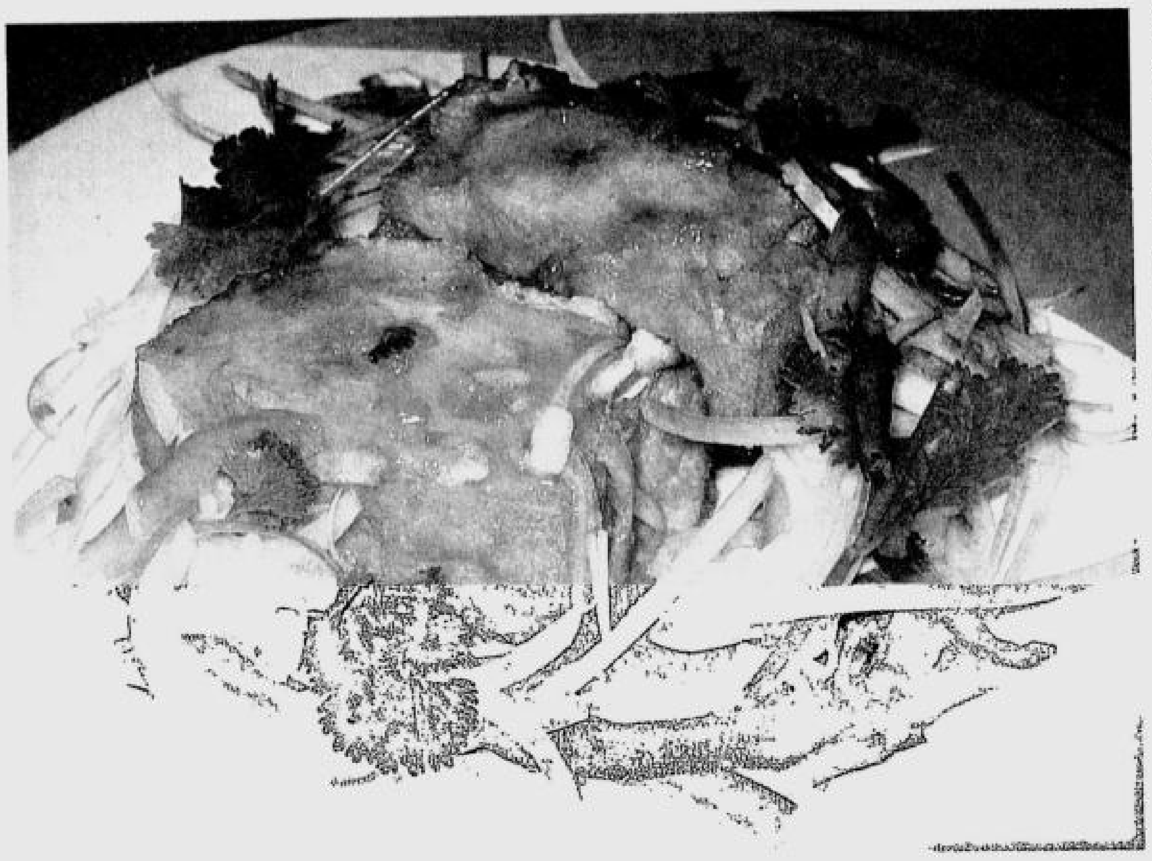
LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

DOUBLE exposure to dining pleasure/C3



STEAMED Stuffed Bean Curd

Chef Lee Yan Feng of Manila Pavilion's Peony Garden goes through the whole harrowing process of tofu-making and the result is a 'leche-flan' texture

CHEF Lee Yan Feng

Melts-in-your-mouth bean curd

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

THERE HAS BEEN A TUG OF war over whether soy-based products are actually good or harmful to your health. But of late, close to everything seems harmful anyway!

Nevertheless, it is quite true that when it comes to bean curd, it's either you love it or you don't. When you do, it becomes a lifelong penchant.

I was at the Peony Garden Restaurant at the Manila Pavilion a few weeks back to sample the delicate bean curd of chef Lee Yan Feng. He said that his goal was "to come up with *leche flan*-like tofu that melts in your mouth." He extracted soy milk from the soy beans and steamed it himself. This way, he said, was the only guarantee to get his tofu exactly the way he wanted it.

The end result was worth it! The tofu melted in my mouth—it was so soft, light and silky. After each mouthful, there was a craving for the texture all over again that I could never seem to have enough of it.

Chef Feng hails from a family of chefs from Pahang, Malaysia, specializing in Chinese-Malay cooking. Judging from his tofu, I am certain he will be in business for a very long time. Call 5261212.

I would like to know the Tagalog for coco milk. If we go to the *palengke* and tell them *kase*. I understand there's some equipment used for extracting that, right?

1. How long does it last without refrigeration?

2. How long does it last if carried under the sun?

3. What's the taste if taken as is?

CHRISTLE

Cute! So *sosyal* this question! But I love *sosyal* questions so I will answer this one just for you, Christle.

- Coconut milk is *gata*. If you want to be more specific, *kakang gata* is the first extraction, also known as coconut cream, while gata is the second extraction or coconut milk. In Asian cookery, coconut milk is classified into three: thick milk—first extraction—pure, no water added; medium milk—is a combination of 50-percent thick milk and 50-percent thin milk; thin milk—after having squeezed for the first extraction, add 1 cup of tepid water to the coconut and squeeze again.
- If you want to simmer/cook with *gata*, the best to use is medium milk then once the dish is done, a final splash of *kakang gata* or thick milk is added allowing it to go through one boil to heighten the flavor and to develop that creamy consistency.

MELTS/ C2

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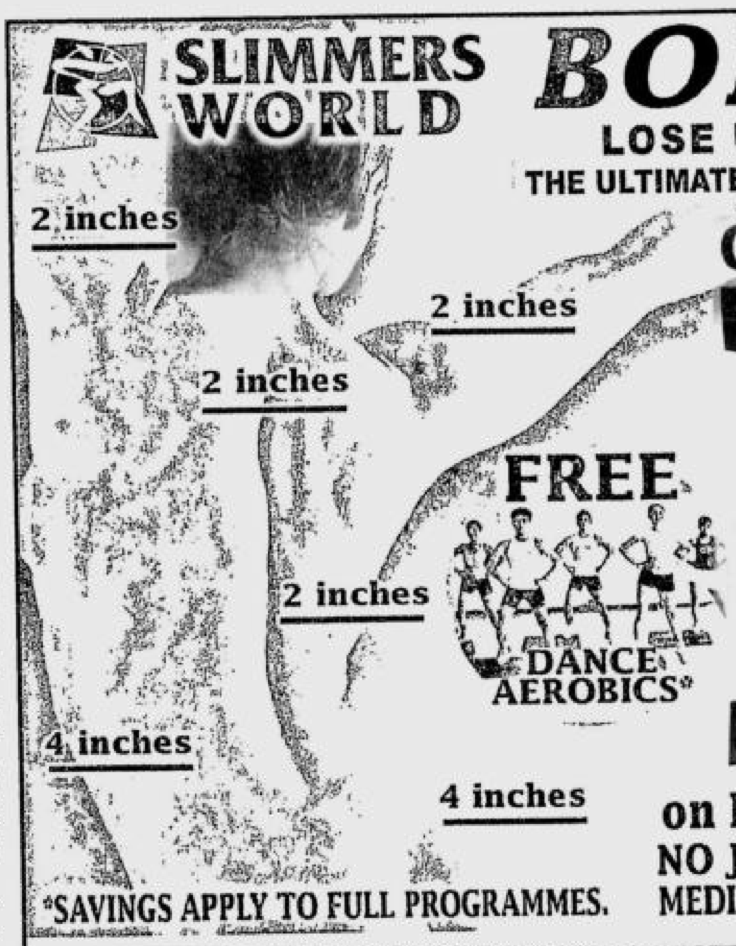

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Melts-in-your-mouth bean curd

From page C1

BEAN Curd with Century Egg

• Make sure that when you have your *niyog* grated, tell them to grate only the white portion. I notice that in the markets, without instructing them, they grate up until the *bao*. When this happens you have discolored coconut and when your coconut is discolored, the coconut milk too becomes discolored and fails to become nice, white and rich-looking hence, affecting the appearance of your food.

• Equipment for extracting gata? Your *kamay*! Or you can use a potato ricer lined with a muslin cloth or just a potato ricer, straining the milk or the cream after it has been extracted. In Thailand, they have large coconut-milk extractors made of stainless steel but this is wise only if you are a restaurateur. I heard they have them in Quiapo already, in Calle Echague. Or you can have one fabricated.

• I suggest that coconut milk be extracted only before it is about to be used. Or if you are pressed for time and have much to prepare, extract and then leave in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it.

• I buy my *niyog* as I need it. My mom buys it on her market day and freezes it. The day she needs it is when she extracts.

• Bringing your *gata* to one boil with a pinch of salt, making it last longer. Be very careful as coconut milk spoils rather quickly and proper handling for your safety is required.

• When picking out niyog, look at the *bao*. If it looks young, do not buy it. Young coconut hardly makes good milk material. This time, old is better than young!

How long does it last if carried under the sun?

• About your second question, why do you want to make *pasyal* with your *gata* or *niyog*? Seriously, the lesser it is exposed to direct sun or heat, the more sterile the conditions and the better the handling, the safer you and your coconut milk will be. Store in a cool place until it is ready for use.

What's the taste if taken as is?

• Well, like strawberries! Joking! How does it taste? Like *gata*! Try it!

My son's first birthday is due next month. Can you recommend a caterer that will not eat up all of my budget? Thanks.

AJ

I was recently at my sister's for an office party for 200 people and Kusina ni Kambal catered. To my surprise, the chapchae was good, making use of the real Korean noodle and not *sotanghon*; the chicken wings were yum and there was *lumpiang ubod* and bottomless iced tea. All for P100 per head! Don't really know what your budget is nor what you had in mind to serve but this I think is pretty good! Lots of food! Call 9331218.

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

Ice, ice numbers

THE CONSUMER

THIS E-MAIL WAS FORWARDed by Filipino nurses working in Canada. I don't know where it originated from but the idea makes sense and it is so simple.

To facilitate notification of next of kin during emergencies outside the home, it is suggested that people should include in their mobile phone built-in directories the word "ICE," which should contain the number of the person or persons to be contacted "in case of emergency" (ICE).

In an emergency situation, ambulance, hospital staff—even firemen and policemen—will then be able to find out quickly who a person's next of kin are and be able to contact them. Of course, emergency/rescue people have to be taught to look for the word "ICE" in victims' cell phones.

It must be so frustrating for both emergency workers and victims' next of kin that there is often no way of knowing who to call even if a cell phone is found. Though some people would enter numbers for "mother" or "dad" or "sis," wives', husbands' and children's numbers do not usually get such descriptive entries.

For more than one contact name, there can be ICE1, ICE2, ICE3, etc.

The only problem about adopting in the Philippines this sensible practice is, given the high incidence of cell phone theft, there is the risk that unscrupulous persons will use the ICE numbers to cause mischief.

Feedback

A reader, kiko_seijuro@yahoo.com, after reading "Winners can end up losers" (March 8), sent the story of his own "good fortune." He received a text message saying he won P950,000. With only P200 in his pocket, he said he bought e-load worth P60 to inquire about his prize. The person who answered told him, to claim his prize, he had to submit three colored ID pictures, police clearance and barangay clearances, residence and birth certificates. She then asked for his bank account number where the prize money would be deposited. But, she added, it was also part of the requirement that he should buy seven Smart Buddy and five Globe Prepaid cards.

The person, he said, even gave me an address if he wanted to go their office to submit the requirements personally. The address: GMA, Charity Foundation, 3/F, Room 308, Central Bank of the Philippines, Vito Cruz, Malate, Manila, Admin. Office. (People at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas not only deny the existence of such a foundation in their premises but also points out that their agency is no longer called the Central Bank.)

Kiko's lament, which no doubt is shared by others who have been targeted by these unscrupulous individuals, "...*mahirap na nga ako, pag hihirapin pa ako ng mga ewan....*"

Following another piece on bank charges, reader lenetsai@yahoo.com reported that his bank charged P50 for interbranch deposit. "I find this quite ridiculous. When online banking and ATM card were introduced, part of their marketing strategy was to promote the convenience of (this form of) banking (as) customers did not have to travel to the branch where they had an account... to (make) deposits or withdrawals. Now that more and more customers are (availing of this) service, banks are taking advantage (through) these charges.

Meanwhile, Our thanks to both Sun and Smart for acting promptly on problems sent in by roseipanag@yahoo.com and dzpatdu@yahoo.com, respectively.

(Our regular columnist, Marietta V. Giron, is indisposed. Please send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; PO Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph —Editor)

INNO Restaurant and Bar at Sgt. Esquerra St., QC., offers Yakisoba and Gyudon. It caters for all occasions. Another branch is at 5/F, BPI Buendia Center, Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City. Call 9226984 or 9289339.

BLACKBEARD'S Seafood Island features Grilled Hawaiian Ulang. The restaurant offers barbecue favorites, hot plates, Seafoods in Fisherman's Sour Broth, Crabs a la carte, Crabs by the Basket, Fresh Visayan Blue Crabs/California, Prawns and Lobster Treasures, Oysters and Clams, Barbecue and Deep-fried Trippings, Grilled Seafood and Fish Selection, Seafood Rice, vegetables and desserts. All-day breakfast is available. Branches are located at Fiesta Market! Market!, Fort Bonifacio, Global City, and Shopwise Araneta Center. Call 9135701 and 8867692.

Rare delicacy makes for exotic dishes

DINING OUT

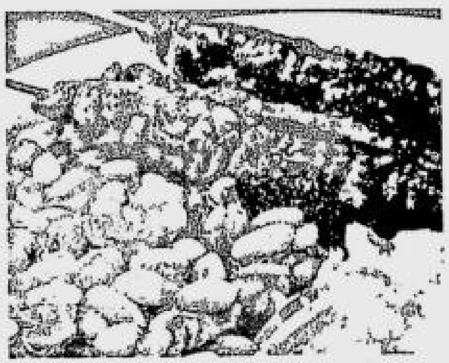
CROWNE Plaza's Xin Tian Di Restaurant features abalone, a rare delicacy, in a variety of exotic-tasting dishes like Sliced Abalone Sashimi served with Spicy Sauce or Braised Abalone with Oyster Sauce. Other specialty dishes include Double-Boiled Fish Maw Soup with Sliced Abalone; Braised Abalone rolled with Asparagus; and Sliced Abalone, Black Mushrooms and Sea Cucumber with Brown Sauce. Call 6337222.

MANILA Pavilion's newest coffee shop, Seasons, is giving away invites to free lunch or dinner buffet to those who will have either a full lunch or dinner buffet with two companions. The "Be Our Guest" promo runs until Oct. 31. Invitations can be used to avail of the buffet featuring international dishes. Lunch is 11:30-3 p.m. and dinner 6:30-10:30 p.m. Call 5261212 loc. 2318. Meanwhile, Sips and Bites promo at the hotel's Boulvar Restaurant and Music Lounge is available until June 30.

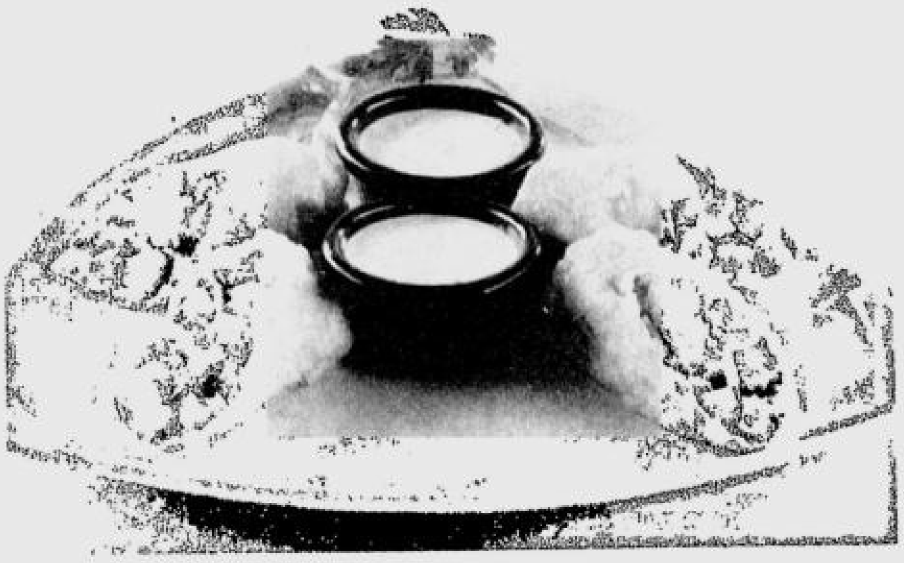
THE HERITAGE Hotel's Restaurant Riviera presents during the whole month of June "Sarap Fiesta," featuring Filipino favorites. The buffet lunch or dinner is priced at P950+ per person. Call 8548888.

CASCADA launched recently new power lunch dishes, including Garlic-Butter Prawns in Aligue Coconut Cream Sauce on Herb Pasta with Eggplant Tempura, Pork Sisig and Quail Egg Napoleon on Wonton Crisp. Cascada is at the 2/L, Greenbelt 3.

ZHONGNANHAI Chinese Bistro at Greenbelt 2 offers special no-meat dishes: the ZNH Seafood Rice and Noodle Toppings and the ZNH Seafood Specials (a la carte). Call 7581111 or 4593663.



HULA-HULA Seafood and Barbecue House at Westgate Alabang presents Island Barbecue Feasts, barbecue and jumbo belly chops grilled with a choice of Manila Smoke, Teriyaki Adventure, Adobo Rub and Olive Oil and Herbs; and Mess of Steaks, grilled US Angus beef cuts with two side dishes (macaroni salad, potato salad, mashed potatoes, island fries, chili beans, summer veggie mix). Call 7712291 or 7712289.



HEALTHY AND EXOTIC

CPK offers hot new dishes for 2006 that are yummy, healthy and exotic-tasting.
They include Chipotle Chicken Pizza, Milan Pizza, Avocado Club Eggrolls, Szechuan Orange Chicken Lettuce Wraps, Clam Chowder, Thai Crunch Salad and Shanghai Garlic Noodles.
CPK has branches at Glorietta 3, Ayala Center Makati; Corte de las Palmas, Alabang Town Center; 2/F, Bridgeway Shangri-La Mall; Belaggio Square, Tomas Morato; and the newly opened CPK in Promenade Greenhills.

AVOCADO Club Egg Rolls—chunks of fresh avocados, chicken, tomato, Monterey Jack cheese and applewood smoked bacon, wrapped in a crispy Wonton roll and served with ranchita sauce or herb ranch dressing

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Searching for 'singgang' . . .

From page C4

(you guessed it, the thin noodle). My companion noticed that steamed rice was called *nasi puti*.

The Chinese corner was quite popular. I waited with other people for the oyster cake to be done. Such patience was rewarded with a hot, freshly cooked and extremely good oyster cake. There, too, were roasted duck and grilled river shrimps.

The Indian chefs enumerated each and every dish, as I looked around to make my choice—the curries, the *tandoori* chicken and breads such as *naan*. I chose the inviting *palak paneer*, spinach with white cheese. And, with that, the *pappadum*, crisp bread made spicy with dots of black pepper.

Local favorites were also present at the appetizer, dessert and drinks sections.

Since there is no such thing as courses in Asian cooking, one can have the appetizers anytime. I had *popiah*, local *lumpia* with cooked *singkamas* as main ingredient, midway through my lunch. I probably didn't look like a local because I was asked how hot I wanted my *popiah*.

A VIEW of The StraitsKitchen dining area.

The Indonesian vegetable salad with peanut sauce, *gado-gado*, was made to order for a diner beside me.

Drinks included the local *teh tarik*, tea mixed with Carnation condensed milk. The brand seemed quite important, as some stalls in Singapore displayed the cans on their counters. That reminded me of how we insisted on using evaporated milk (any brand) with our *halo-halo*.

Choices for dessert included Malay as well as Nonya native cakes, such as the layered *kueh lapis*, and the iced dessert of ice *kacang* and *chendol* with its mix of coconut milk, brown sugar and red beans.

There was such a crowd for lunch at the restaurant that seated 260. Most were Asians, with just a sprinkling of Westerners. Among the diners were were many Muslim women, ladies who lunch who had to be sure that the place served halal food, cookery procedures and delivery of food and service according to Islamic rules. The hotel worked together with the governing body of the Islamic community to ensure that.

Last April, during an overnight stay in Singapore on an assignment, I was fascinated by The Oriental's buffet that included the local food, especially the *otak otak* (fish cake cooked in banana leaf) during breakfast. But The StraitsKitchen turned out to be even more amazing.

I hope Filipino food would get the same treatment here from international hotel chains, and not just during food festival. It should be a daily offering.

Three days of cooking demos

TIENDESITAS PRESENTS "A Taste of Manila" and "A Catered Affair," June 23-25.

Former First Lady Amelita "Ming" Ramos will formally open on June 23 the three-day event that will be participated in by some of the country's best food caterers, restaurateurs, canteen owners, food concessionaires and gourmets.

Guests can learn about the catering business and get some tips from successful caterers.

The first day will feature a fashion show followed by cooking demos for Nestlé by Swan Catering, for Century Tuna by Red Chef Catering, for Ajinomoto by Swan Catering, for Nestlé by Tamayo's Catering, for Unilever by Swan, for Del Monte by Josiah's Catering, for Silver Swan by VS&F Classic Food Int'l., and for Clara Olé by Juan Carlo the Caterer.

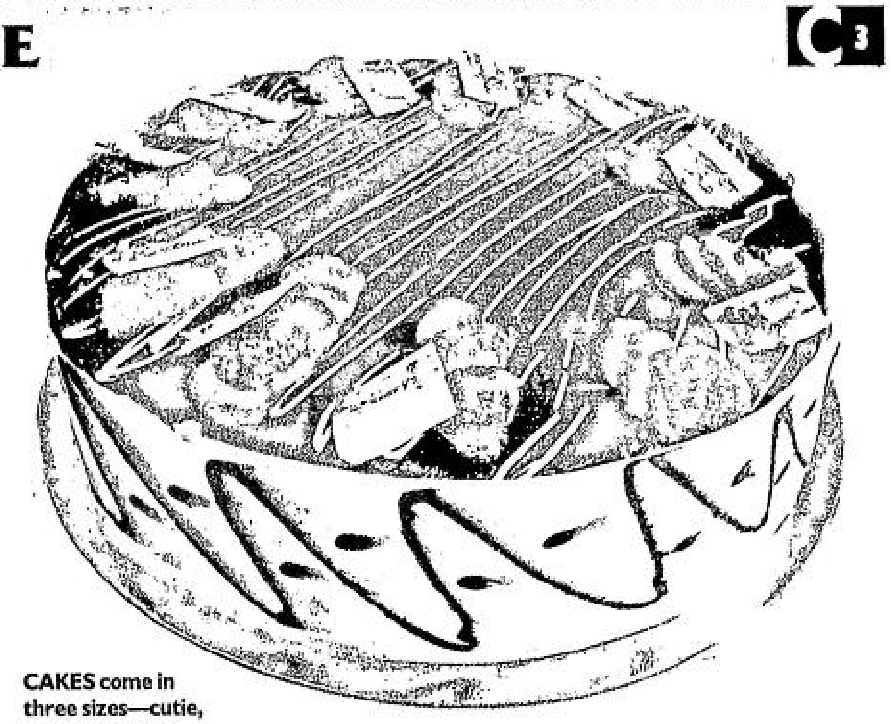
More cooking demos will be held the next day: Nestlé, Josiah's Catering; Silver Swan, The Red Chef Catering; Nestlé, Hizon's Catering; Ajinomoto, VS&F Classic Food Int'l.; Unilever, Al Navarro Catering; Silver Swan, Juan Carlo the Caterer; Unilever, Josiah's Catering; and Century Tuna, Hizon's Catering. A bar tending show will be presented by Del Monte.

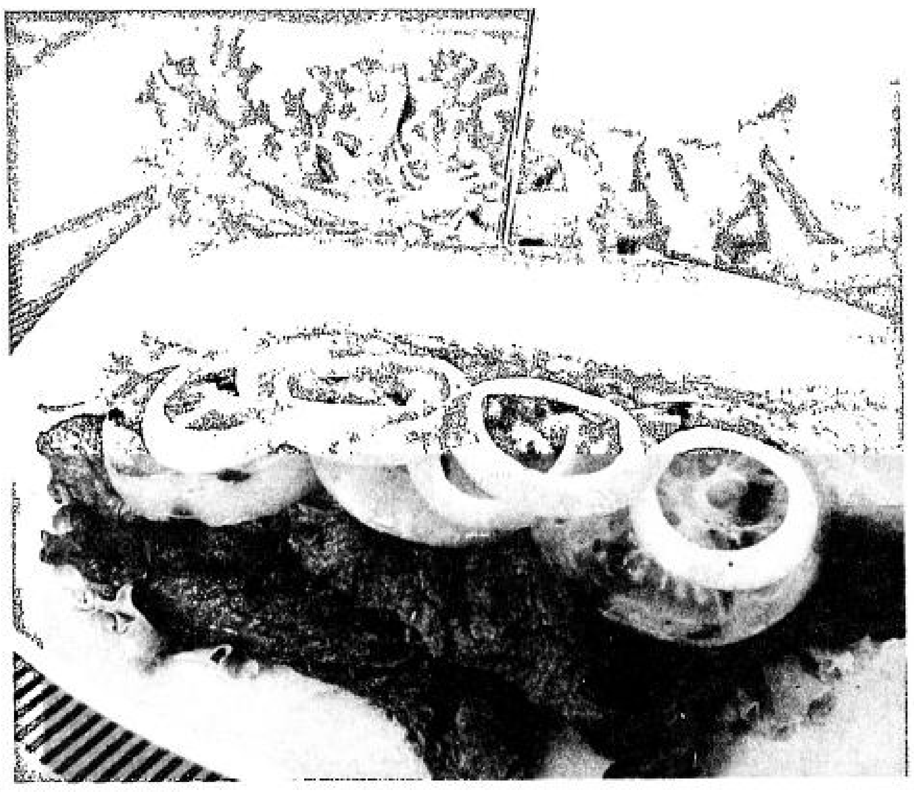
The third day will feature cooking demos for Unilever by Tamayo's Catering; Del Monte, Kusina ni Kambal; Clara Olé, VS&F Classic Food Int'l.; Century Tuna, Juan Carlo the Caterer; Ajinomoto, Kusina ni Kambal Catering Cooking Demo; Nestlé, Kusina ni Kambal Catering; Clara Olé, Al Navarro Catering.

The event will also feature performances by John Arcilla, Romell Santiago, and soloists Atom and Marivic; String Minstrel Quartet; Rondalla; and Marikina Dance Guild.

Tiendesitas is on Ortigas Avenue and E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue (C-5) in Pasig City.

PAN-SEARED Chicken in Pesto Sauce from Salt and Pepper


CAKES come in three sizes—cutie, midi and grande.


STEAK sandwich

Double dose of dining delight

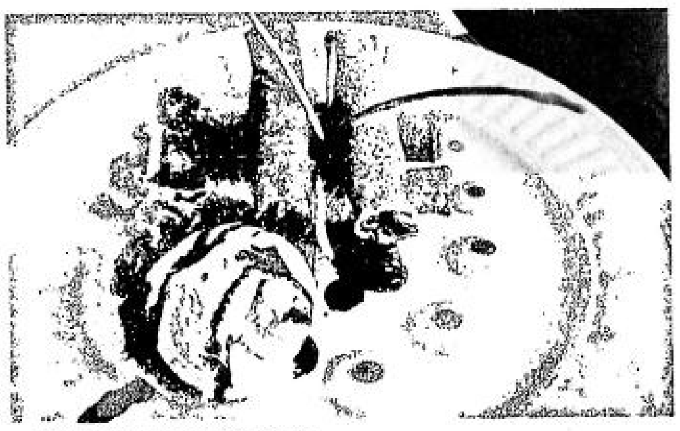
By Pam Pastor

HOW CAN YOU BE IN TWO places at the same time? Mandy Moore and Shane West had the solution in "A Walk to Remember" and that was by standing on the border of North Carolina and Virginia. But how can you be in two restaurants at the same time?

Salt and Pepper and In Love With Sweets have the answer.

Managed by the people behind Play & Display (yes, the fab furniture place), Salt and Pepper and In Love With Sweets are two different dining concepts that share a location.

FROM In Love with Sweets, Kiwi Dark Dark Choco Cocktail and...


... BANANA Fritters à la mode

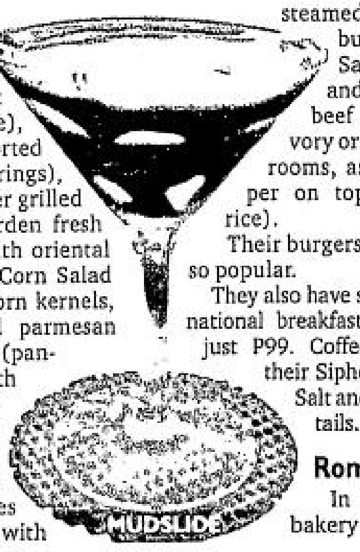
Fusion for families

Salt and Pepper is a casual dining restaurant that aims to give its customers value for money. "We want to offer good food, nutritious food at affordable prices," said general manager Geena Llamanzares.

Located along Ayala Avenue, Salt and Pepper attracts a lot of people from the surrounding offices. But at night and on weekends, it becomes a hotspot for families and for people who want to unwind.

The menu is a fusion of Western, Mediterranean and Asian delights. With servings meant to be shared, Salt and Pepper is a great place for family gathering and other large groups.

Bestsellers include Calamares (served with wasabe mayo dip and prawn crackers), the Chicken Crispies (crunchy marinated chicken skin served with a special dip), Chicken Tempura (breaded chicken fillet served with tempura sauce), Fisherman's Catch (fried assorted seafood served with onion rings), Oriental Chicken Salad (tender grilled chicken breast on top of garden fresh greens and crispy noodles with oriental sesame dressing), Crab and Corn Salad (wedges of crabmeat stick, corn kernels, tomatoes, bell peppers and parmesan cheese), Sesame Mahi-Mahi (pan-seared mahi-mahi fillet with sesame seeds served with lemon sauce), Sole Piccati (egg-coated fish fillet with parmesan cheese and herbs, served with cubed tomatoes and capers sautéed in butter; with steamed jasmine rice and fresh buttered vegetables), Salt and Pepper Rib Eye and Beef Oriental (tender beef strips stir-fried in savory oriental sauce with mushrooms, asparagus and bell pepper on top of steamed jasmine rice).



Their burgers and sandwiches are also popular.

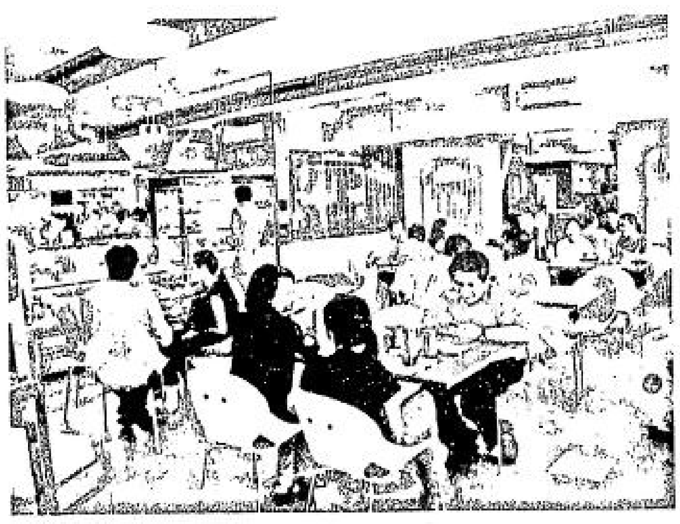
They also have special Filipino and international breakfast packages available for just P99. Coffee-lovers will appreciate their Siphon Brewed Coffee Blend. Salt and Pepper also serves cocktails.

Romance with sweets

In Love With Sweets is a bakery café that offers pizza, pasta, sandwiches, breads and mouth-watering desserts. Its glass-enclosed kitchen offers a clear view of their chef and bakers as they work. "We want to give our guests the assurance that everything here is prepared not only to taste good but that proper hygiene and cleanliness are being observed at all times," Llamanzares said.

Salt and Pepper and In Love With Sweets share one location and a desire to serve good food at affordable prices

Bestsellers include the Frutti Di Mare Pizza (topped with calamares, shrimps and mozzarella cheese), Chicken Fajita Pizza (topped with BBQ chicken, green bell pepper, onions, olives and mozzarella cheese), Chicken with Walnuts and Cream Cheese Sandwich (chicken breast fillet on a freshly baked wheat loaf with cream cheese and walnuts) and the Honey-Glazed Ham with Cheese (honey-glazed ham sandwiched in freshly baked ciabatta and topped with cheddar cheese). The Thai Spicy Pasta (fettuccini pasta in special peanut flavored sauce with peeled shrimps, bell peppers and leeks sprinkled with parmesan cheese) is a flavorful adventure for the palate.


INSIDE In LOVE with Sweets

Their Banana Fritters à la mode (banana spring rolls topped with vanilla ice cream and chocolate ganache) is a wonderful way to end a meal. Their version of *halo-halo*, That's Cool (made of eight different ingredients topped with chocolate ice cream), is also a great choice.

In Love With Sweets offers cakes in three different sizes—cutie, midi and grande. Popular cake selections include La Sonata, Dolce De Leche, Yoyo Oreo, Scott Mousse, Sinful Decadence, Choco Walnut, Tartufo and Cheesecake.

The best part is, no matter where you sit, you can order from both places.

Diners who fall in love with the cutlery, cups, dishes, chairs, tables and even the cozy sofas at both restaurants would be glad to know that they're available at Play & Display stores. (There's one right beside the restos.)

The two restaurants share more than just their owners and the doorway that connects them. The attention to details and the inviting ambience are two more things they have in common. "We want a happy place," said Llamanzares. And that's what they have.

Salt and Pepper and In Love With Sweets are located at G/F Security Building, 6797 Ayala Ave. corner V.A. Rufino Street Makati. Call 8876363. Business hours are from 7 a.m.-10 p.m. on weekdays and after midnight on weekends.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

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DIGIC II

LAKSA, a rich noodle curry dish

Searching for 'singgang' and ending up in Singapore

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

MY CURIOSITY WAS stoked by an item on a menu sent to me, a Malay menu, to be exact. It said, fish *singgang*. For the expatriate guests at the dinner, *singgang* was described as a hot and sour soup.

Was it the same as our *sinigang*?

Having no Malay recipe book, I searched through the Internet instead. Out of the many entries, what caught my eye was this sentence: "In the Philippines, I think, there's a dish called *sinigang na manok*."

I made a note to correct that after I had read the rest of the essay, especially since the author wrote that they never cooked *singgang* with chicken and that *manok* in Malay meant any wild fowl, certainly not the domesticated chicken.

A further search showed that chicken (*ayam*) *singgang* was cooked in Sumatra, Indonesia.

So what is the Malay *singgang*, specifically as cooked in Terengganu, Malaysia where the blog author is from?

He described his mother's *singgang* as containing "tamarind, *asam gelugur*, *lengkuas*, salt and whole red chillies, and maybe a clove or two of garlic. Pride of place in the *singgang* was a tuna fish (*ikang aya*), preferably its head."

Sounds similar

That sounds very much like our own *sinigang*. And it helped that a photo of *asam gelugur* (Garcinia atroviridis) was posted. It was the round-shaped *kamias* though I don't know the local name for it. And, just like the *kamias*, the author said the *asam gelugur* was "sliced thinly, then dried in the sun as *asam keping*, sliced *asam*, used as a flavoring in cooking."

We also dry our *kamias* but leave it whole, and it ends up a wrinkled gray, dried fruit used to flavor *sinaing na tulingan* (slow-cooked mackerel pressed in salt).

The *lengkuas* is *langkawas* to us and *galangal* in Thailand. This kind of ginger, however, is not among the ingredients of the classic *sinigang*.

Unlike our *sinigang*, which is an everyday dish, Malay *singgang* can also be a special event dish. The author wrote how, a day or two before the Eid (the Islamic holiday marking the end of Ramadan, a month of fasting), the women of the house cooked *singgang*, leaving the fish inside so the bones became soft. He described the result as "coconuty accompaniment to the *nasi dagang*, rice that's such a ritual to make."

ICE *KACANG* is akin to the *halo-halo*.

One can presume that coconut milk is added at the end, a totally different *singgang* from our *sinigang*.

No 'singgang'

It's just too bad I didn't get to sample the *singgang* on a visit to Singapore last week. The cooking of that island state encompasses Malay, Chinese, Indian and Perenakan, the mixture of Malay and Chinese unique to Singapore.

On the invitation of the Singapore Tourism Board, we tasted different cuisine at both hawker-style stalls and in style at the Grand Hyatt.

I was glad to return to Maxwell Market where I tasted very good Hainanese chicken rice on my first visit to Singapore. The place is much bigger now but still as full as before. My companions and I lined up for our personal favorites, mine the chicken, although we shared some other dishes like the *Perenakan laksa*, a rich coconut curry noodle dish.

We also had *bak kut teh* that was like pork ribs *nilaga*, although we cook pork as *sinigang*. And the carrot cake that was really radish cake because the Chinese regard radish as white carrot.

We ended our meal with their version of the *halo-halo* or the ice *kacang* and banana fritters, the fruit covered in batter and then fried.

As for the high-end presentation of Singaporean food, it made me envious that local food was given such attention in an international hotel.

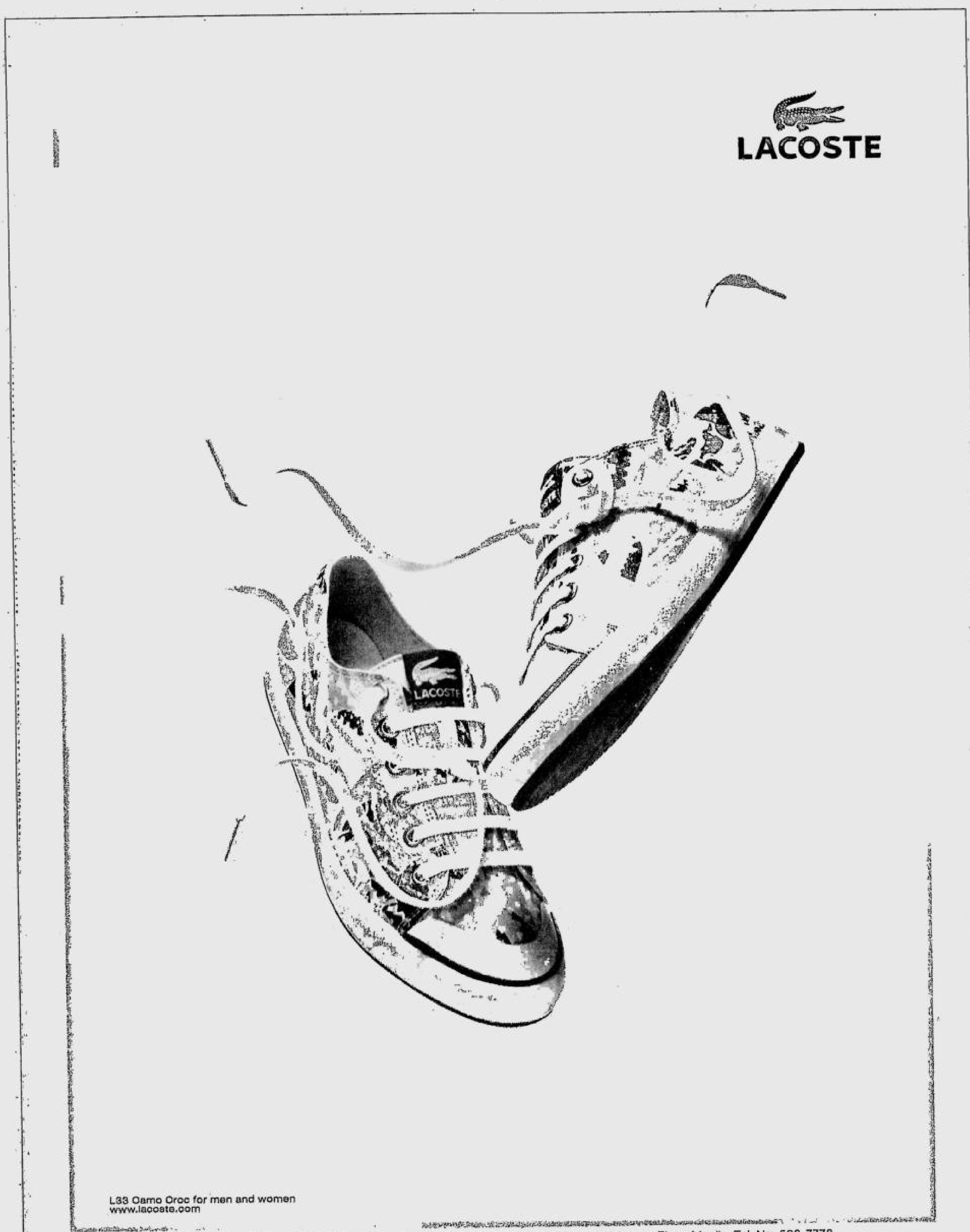
The StraitsKitchen of the Grand Hyatt is a buffet of, yes, what can be found in Maxwell Market, as well as in that other famous hawkers place, Newton Centre, that will open at its old location at the end of the month after a huge renovation.

Local cooking

StraitsKitchen is similar to many buffet places in our hotels, tables in every nook and corner and individual show kitchens. But, instead of having a Japanese table, salad bar, pasta bar or grill, all the different cuisine of Singapore are represented.

Many people at the Malay corner were waiting for *satay* pieces to be grilled. There was *bee hoon*

SEARCHING/ C2



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